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THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SECRETIVE MILITARY ORDER

The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, known simply as the Knights Templar, were the wealthiest, most powerful, and most secretive of the military orders that flourished in the crusading era. Investigate the origins of the order, the Templars' military prowess, their innovative financial management, and the battles in which they made their name. Meet the key leaders, from Hugues de Payens to Richard the Lionheart, and uncover the truth behind the accusations that led to the last grand master being burned at the stake and the order dissolved.

FUTURE

TEMPLARS

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SECRETIVE MILITARY ORDER

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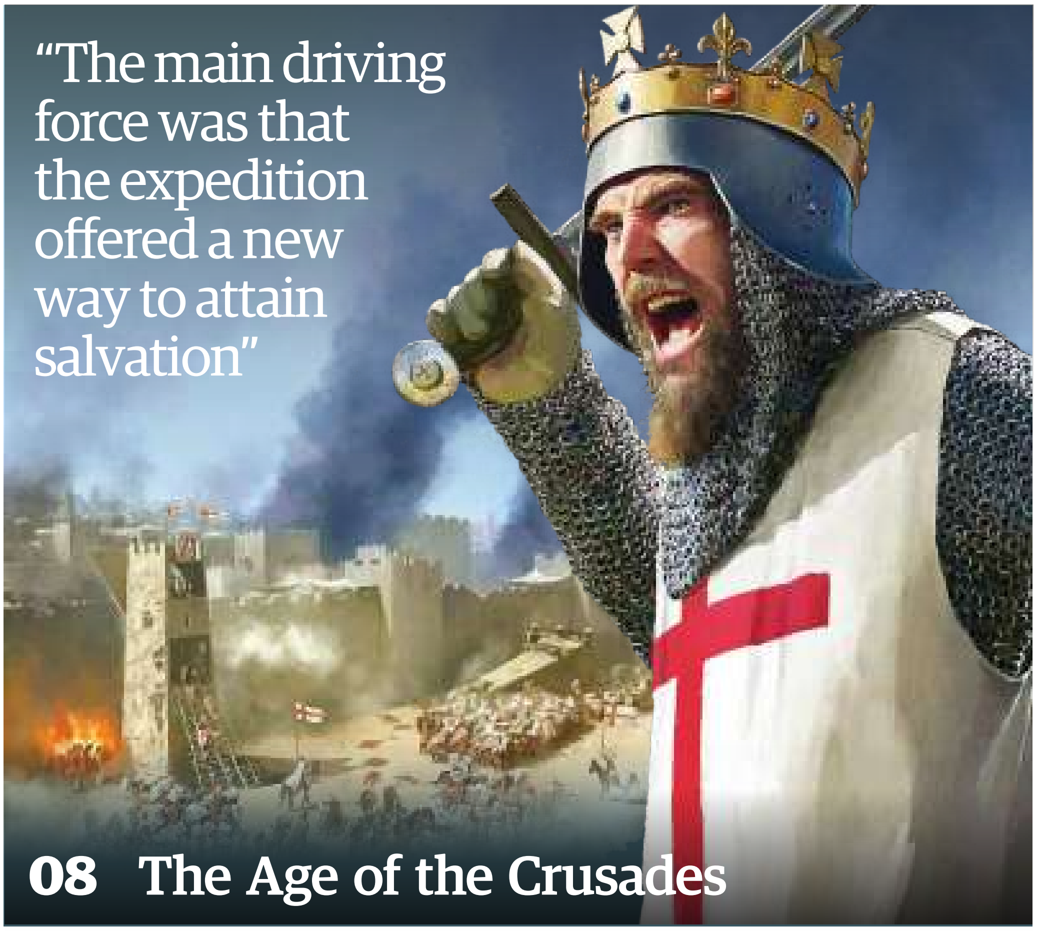
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KNIGHT · TEMPLAR
KNIGHT · HOSPITALLER

The Age of the Crusades

Inside Europe's quest to forge a holy empire in the Middle East through zeal and steel

Written by Peter Price

The Crusades were a struggle for the soul of the Holy Land, with Christian and Muslim forces clashing for more than 200 years. While thousands of ordinary men fought for what they thought was right, seizing control of the Middle East's many religious sites and venerated cities, new military orders like the Knights Templar offered opportunity for advancement; glory in battle could turn minor monarchs into living legends; and all-new dynasties were founded to rule the region. In time, a preoccupation with wealth and status would ultimately consume the Crusaders and shock polite society back in Europe with their avarice.

The First Crusade was called in 1095 by Pope Urban II, proclaiming: "Whoever for devotion alone, but not to gain honour or money, goes to Jerusalem to liberate the Church of God can substitute this journey for all penance." The religious fervour that inspired crusaders to leave their homes and travel thousands of miles to wage a holy war cannot be overstated. While stories of Muslims persecuting native Christians and western pilgrims in Jerusalem helped fuel support, the main driving force was that the expedition offered a new way to attain salvation. The zealous crusaders referred to their force as the 'Army of God', and the fallen as 'dead martyrs'. However, that's not to say there weren't ulterior motives for the First Crusade. For one, the papacy was engaged in a mighty struggle with the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV, and calling the Crusade greatly enhanced Urban II's standing.

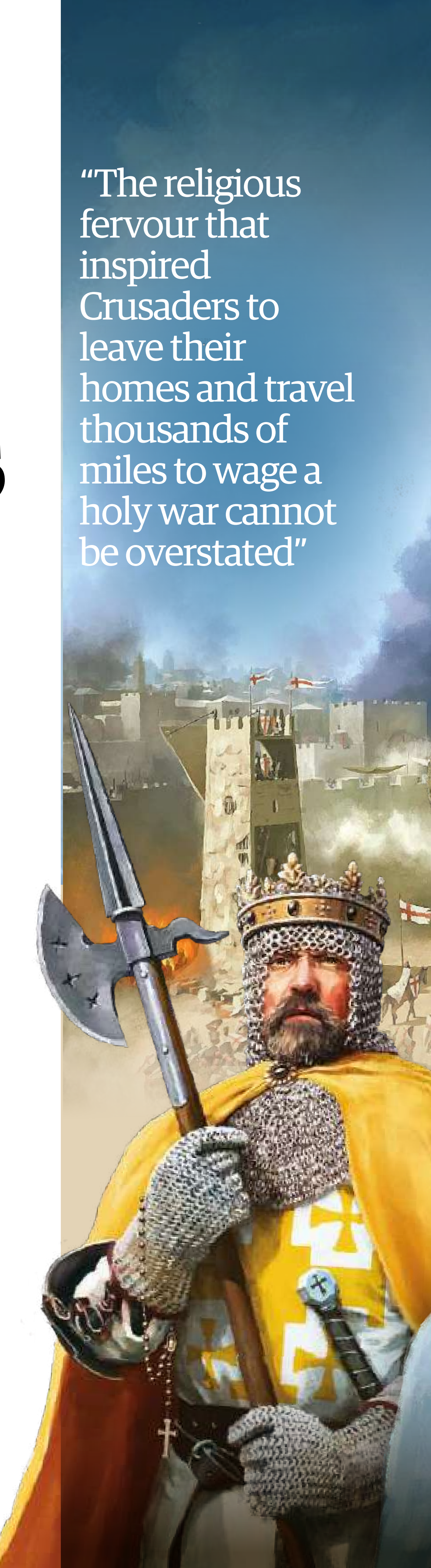
The Byzantine emperor, Alexios I, had also beseeched Urban II to send military aid to help him fight Seljuk Turks encroaching on his border. Relations between the Catholic west and Orthodox east had long been fractious, and the pontiff saw it as an opportunity to improve relations.

Four armies of crusaders were formed from troops of different parts of Europe, led by high-ranking nobles, including Raymond of Saint-Gilles, Godfrey of Bouillon, Hugh of Vermandois and Bohemond of Taranto (along with his nephew, Tancred). While people from all social classes 'took the cross' it's notable that no kings fought in the First Crusade. A fifth column of less-organised knights and commoners known as 'the People's Crusade' was also led by the popular preacher called Peter the Hermit.

The crusaders marched overland to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, in August 1096. Peter's army arrived first and did not heed Emperor Alexios I's advice to wait for back-up before attacking. In the first major clash between the crusaders and Muslims, Turkish forces crushed the invading Europeans at Civetot.

Once the full force of Christians arrived, the Crusades quickly went their way. In quick succession, they overthrew the city Nicaea, the Seljuk capital of Anatolia; the Roman Empire's former third city, Antioch, in June 1098; and

Injured crusaders would often request Muslim doctors, as their medical knowledge was superior



"The religious fervour that inspired Crusaders to leave their homes and travel thousands of miles to wage a holy war cannot be overstated"

Jerusalem in 1099. The capture of the holy city saw the crusaders unleash an orgy of destruction, killing men, women and children, with both Jews and Muslims targeted as the city was 'cleansed' of religious opposition.

Before they crossed the Bosporus, Alexios I had tried to make the Latin forces swear an oath of allegiance to him recognising his authority over any land regained from the Turks, as well as any other territory they might conquer. Tellingly, all but Bohemond – who had previously fought the Byzantines and wanted to get back in their good books – resisted taking the oath. With the Holy Land now under western control, the territory was divided up into settlements, collectively known as Outremer, literally meaning 'overseas' in French.

These were comprised of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Principality of Antioch and the counties of Tripoli and Edessa. However, while a new Latin aristocracy sprang up in the Middle East, most crusaders returned home with their plunder, leaving the small and fractured kingdoms to stand alone against the still numerous and powerful Islamic rulers. While they were protected by mighty fortresses, these states hung on a knife edge and constantly struggled for survival.

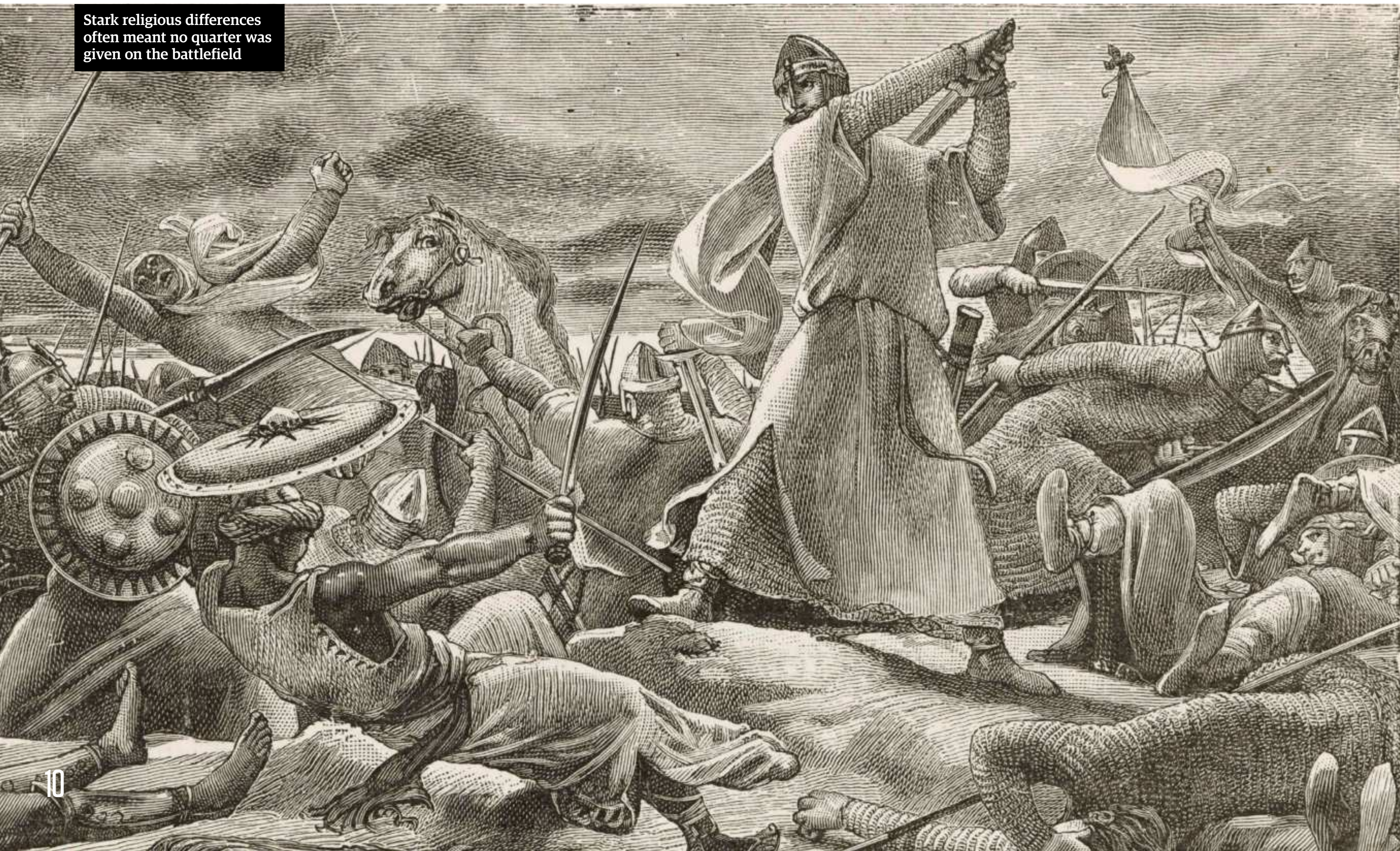
While the Outremer states were being carved up, the nobles that led the Crusade were coy about being crowned ruler. When Raymond of Saint-Gilles refused to be crowned, Godfrey of Bouillon accepted it but refused the title of king – preferring to be called 'Defender of the Holy Sepulchre' instead.

However, down the years Godfrey's successors had no such qualms. His brother, Baldwin, became the first crusader king in 1100, expanding the Kingdom of Jerusalem into modern-day Israel, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. He died leading raids on Islamic Egypt. His successor, another cousin, became Baldwin II, and continued to conquer territory for the kingdom.

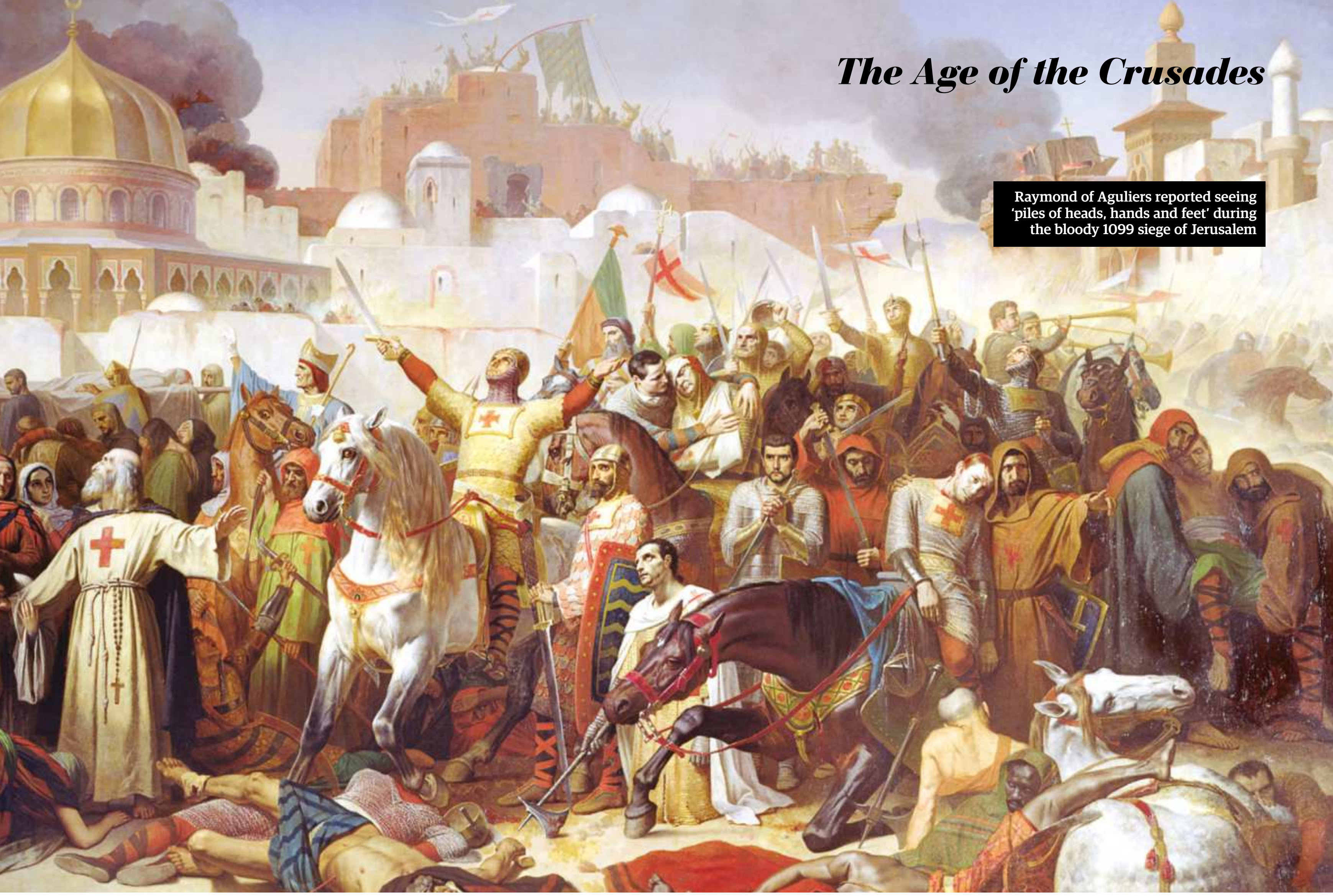
However, it was under a crusader queen that Jerusalem enjoyed a golden age. Baldwin II's half-French, half-Armenian daughter, Melisende, was married to Fulk of Anjou – a French aristocrat with close ties to both the French and English crowns. However, it was she, groomed to rule from a young age, who held the real power from 1131. Capable of cowing her husband until his death in 1143, Melisende also served as regent for her 13-year-old son, another Baldwin. She not only built today's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but also the Tomb of the Virgin Mary and the markets of Jerusalem that survive to this day.

It was also Melisende who sounded the alarm that led Pope Eugenius III to call for the Second Crusade in 1145. In December 1144, Zengi, the Muslim ruler of Aleppo and Mosul, captured Edessa. Melisende sent armies to save the crusader state, but without further reinforcements the last ditch effort was bound to fail. The other major crusader state, Antioch, was preoccupied with its own fight with the Byzantines, so the Latin settlers requested help from the west.

Eager to live up to their crusading forefathers, this time many royals took the cross, most notably



Stark religious differences often meant no quarter was given on the battlefield



Raymond of Aguliers reported seeing 'piles of heads, hands and feet' during the bloody 1099 siege of Jerusalem

King Louis VII of France and Emperor Conrad III of Germany. Louis was also joined by his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who travelled with him to Constantinople and Jerusalem. Though it's said Eleanor insisted on leading the soldiers from her duchy into battle, claims that she dressed as an Amazon while doing so are disputed.

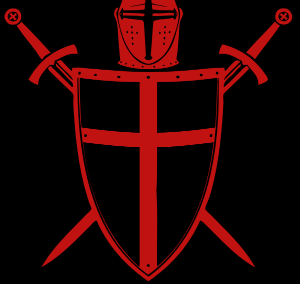
Though the Second Crusade amassed vastly larger forces than the First Crusade, sending 50,000 to the Holy Land, it was not a success. The western forces lacked discipline, supplies and finance, and were badly bloodied by the Seljuk Turks as they crossed Asia Minor.

While the original focus had been saving Edessa, by the time French and Germans arrived in 1147, it was firmly under control of Nur ad-Din, Zengi's successor. Instead, the crusaders targeted the Muslim city of Damascus. Yet four days into their siege, Nur ad-Din arrived with reinforcements, leading to a humiliating retreat. The Europeans returned home in 1148, leaving Jerusalem strategically weaker than when they had arrived.

To complicate matters, around this time Melisende fell out with her son, Baldwin III. Now seven years into his majority, Melisende still held the reins of power, unwilling to let her headstrong son take the throne as sole monarch. A compromise was reached where Baldwin governed the north of the region while the queen took Judea and Samaria.

Calculating the First Crusade

35,000
European Christians fought in First Crusade

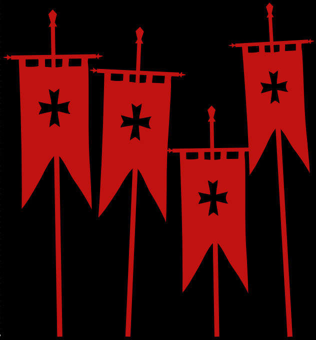


10,000
People killed in the sack of Jerusalem

2,700 miles
Walking distance from Paris to Jerusalem

2
The number of times the crusading army was (allegedly) reduced to cannibalism

4
Number of states created by the crusaders in the Holy Land



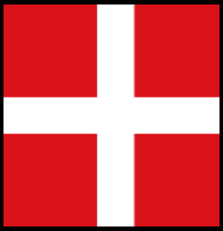
The other orders

Warrior monks who packed a punch

The Order of St Lazarus

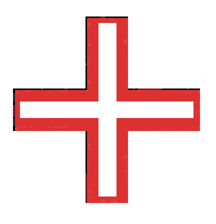
As its name may suggest, this order found its origins and recruits from various leper hospitals around the Holy Land. A knight who contracted the deadly and feared disease was expected to join their military ranks until his condition deteriorated.

Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John



Also known as the Knights Hospitaller, or the Order of St John, this order was originally created to care for sick pilgrims en route to the Holy Land. After being expelled from the Middle East, the order focused on attacking Islamic shipping in the Mediterranean.

The Knights of St Thomas

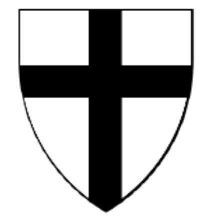


Another order of hospitallers, this order was founded during the Third Crusade to minister to the sick and wounded and bury Crusader dead, but only recruited English knights. Unsurprisingly, this meant that the order's numbers were never very high.

The Order of Mountjoy

This military order named itself after Montjoie, the hill where the first crusaders set their eyes on Jerusalem. Originally charged with protecting pilgrims in Spain, the order received donations from King Baldwin IV, and fought with the Christian army at the horns of Hattin.

The Teutonic Order



More commonly known as the Teutonic knights, this German order was established after the siege of Acre in 1191. Tasked with protecting pilgrims, the Teutonic knights were very active in both the Holy Land and the eastern European crusades against Baltic pagans.

However, civil war broke out when Baldwin invaded his mother's territory. Mother and son eventually reconciled, with Melisende retiring in 1154. After his rule was stabilised, Baldwin was free to defend the borders of the kingdom. After a prolonged campaign, Baldwin finally scored a decisive victory, defeating Nur ad-Din in 1158.

The succession of the kings and queens of Outremer was never a certainty, and Baldwin III's nephew, Baldwin IV, was no exception. Although a bright youth, his tutors became increasingly concerned over his apparent high pain tolerance when playing with other children. This perceived bravery at pain soon gave way to shocking news – the future king had leprosy. Crowned in 1174, his rule was expected to be brief, and not much hope was held that he would be any sort of leader beyond a figurehead.

Baldwin IV quickly dismissed this notion by taking a hard military stance. Conducting raids and skirmishes, the young king won a number of surprising victories against the encroaching Saladin, a sultan who had united much of Egypt, Iraq and Syria under one banner, having his eyes set on Jerusalem.

However, by 1183, weeping sores all over Baldwin's body had rendered it almost useless, with his vision also blurring to the point of near blindness. As a testament to his rule and reputation, upon hearing the 'Leper King' had joined the army defending Jerusalem, albeit carried on a litter, Saladin retreated and would not attack again until Baldwin had passed away in 1185.

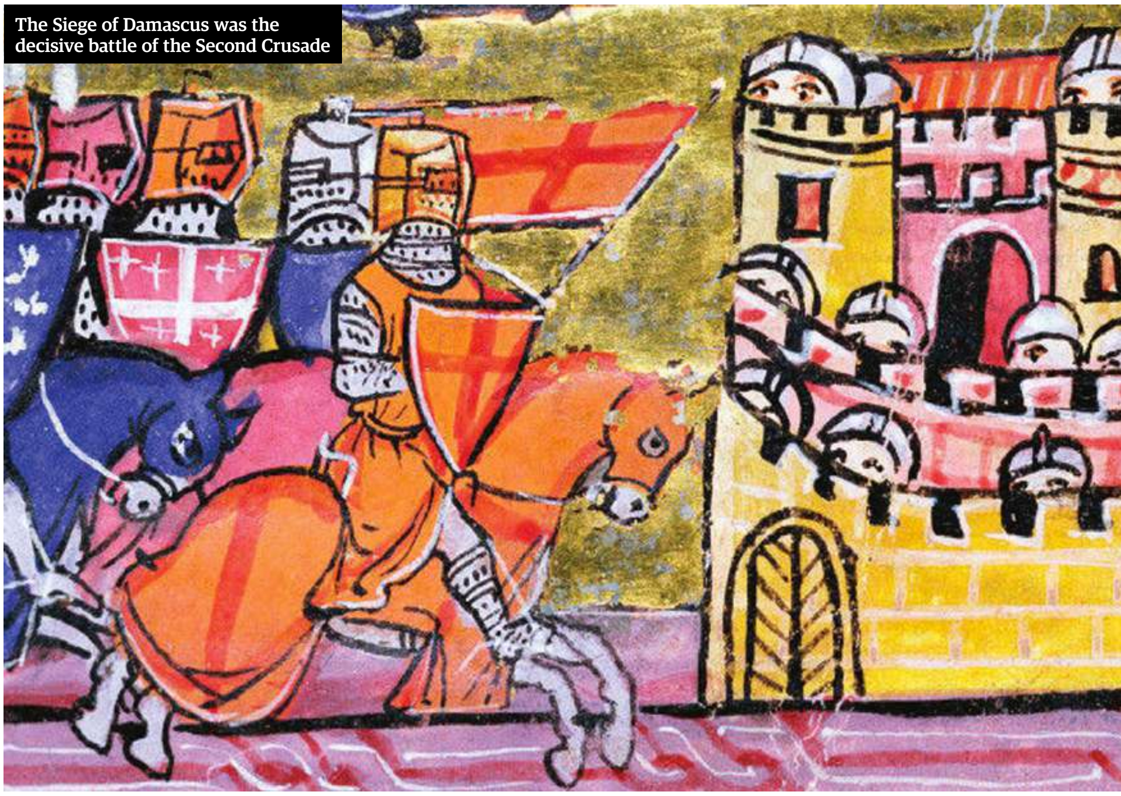
By this time, the crusader states had been emptied of fighting men so all the castles and towns were left with tiny and inexperienced garrisons. The new ruler of Jerusalem, King Guy, was also a military novice, to the point where he marched his army away from precious water sources while chasing Saladin's men in the desert. Delirious with thirst and heat, these men were cut down at the Battle of Hattin in 1187.

With no one left to stand in his way, Saladin snatched Jerusalem from Christian hands. However, it's noteworthy that the sultan did allow the Christian population to buy their way to freedom, and even let them haggle the price down. A stark contrast to the crusaders' bloody rape of the city almost 100 years prior.

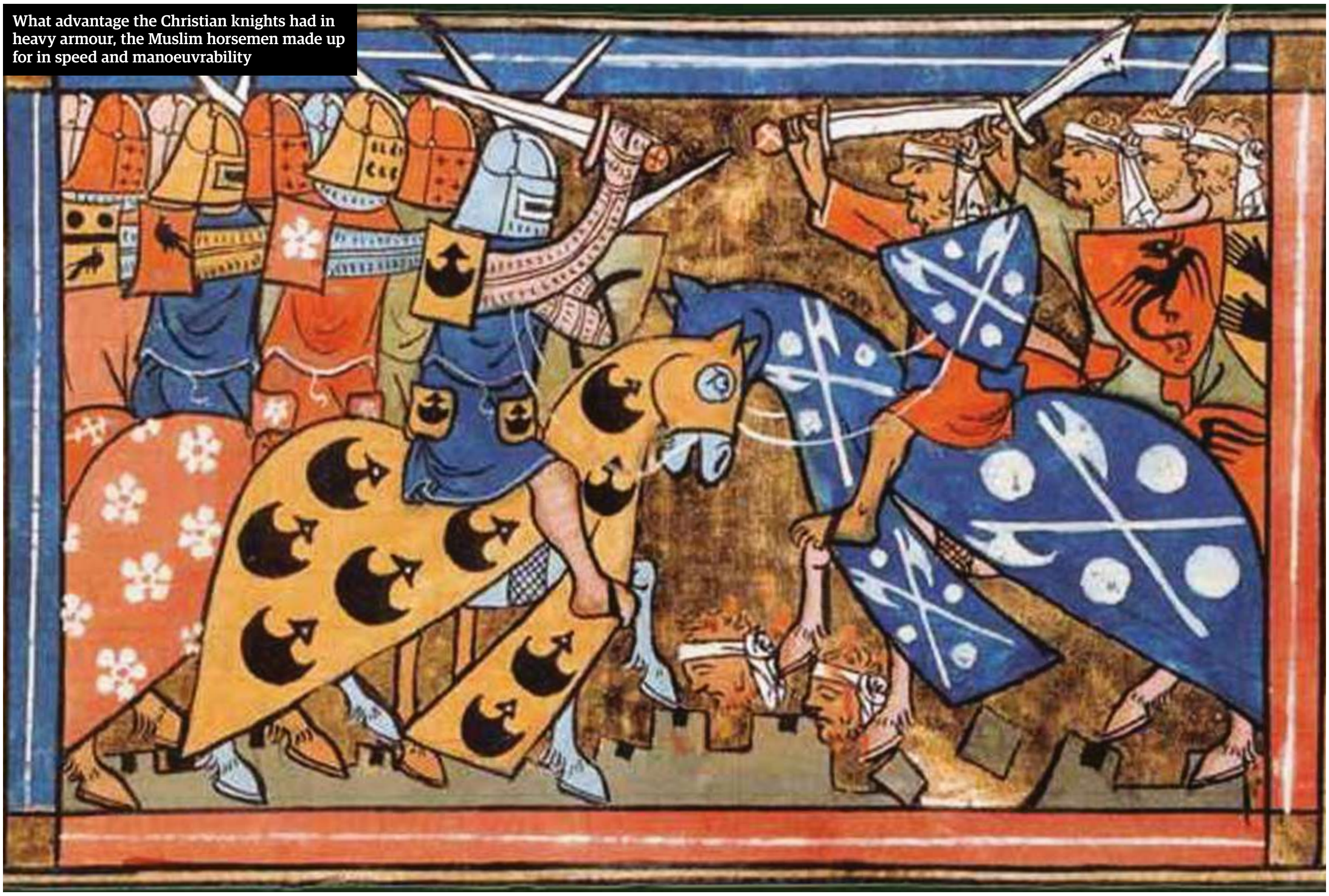
The loss of the Holy City once again sent shock waves across Christendom, and the Third Crusade was quickly called to re-establish control. This crusade would come to be characterised by the rivalry between Saladin and Richard I of England. Although they would never meet in person, the two giants would clash time and time again on the sands of Outremer and achieve legendary status in their respective communities.

The Third Crusade would again be a kingly crusade with three monarchs, Richard I of England, Philip II of France and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, all taking the cross.

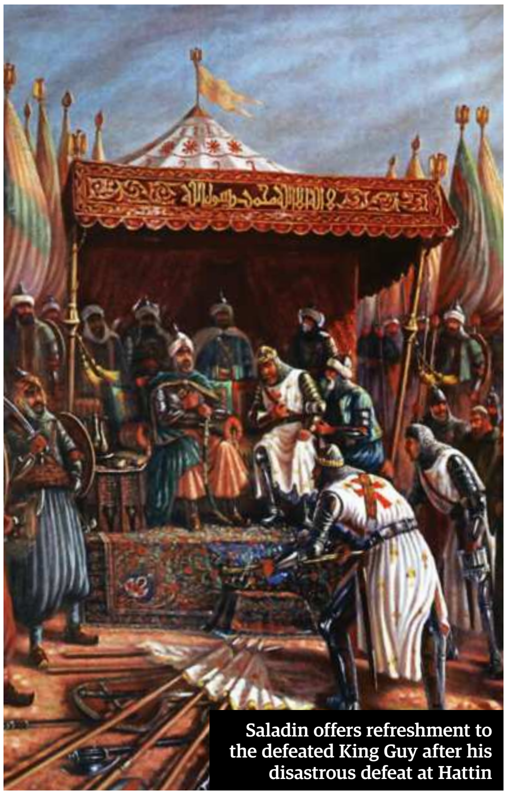
Crusades were also fought against Muslims in Spain, pagans in the Baltic, and even the Mongols



The Siege of Damascus was the decisive battle of the Second Crusade



What advantage the Christian knights had in heavy armour, the Muslim horsemen made up for in speed and manoeuvrability



Saladin offers refreshment to the defeated King Guy after his disastrous defeat at Hattin

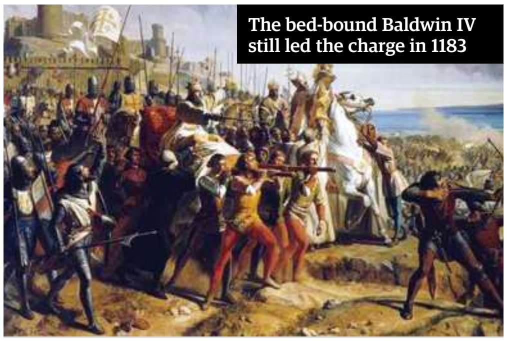
Commanding the largest kingdom, Emperor Frederick was the obvious choice to lead the army. His experience of fighting the Muslims and his massive army of 100,000 men, the largest crusading force at that time, would be invaluable to retake the Holy Land.

However, his triumphant march across Europe was cut short while crossing a river in Armenia ahead of his army. The king's horse shied on a bridge and plunged him into the raging water. Probably weighed down by his armour, Frederick was then dragged under and drowned, a rather unceremonious end for the glorious emperor.

His son, eager to see his father reach the Holy Land, ordered his body to be pickled in vinegar and transported the rest of the way. The emperor's remains were spread across the Holy Land and divided between different churches.

The most prominent leader of the crusade was dead, and now the chance for Richard I to take up the mantle of leader. Son of Eleanor of Aquitaine and her second husband, Henry II, the English king only had a middling reputation when he set off for war, but by the end of the Third Crusade would be regarded as a legend.

Earning the nickname 'Lionheart' for his courage, Richard also dazzled the European and Middle Eastern leaders with his charisma. Many crusaders over the years mortgaged their properties and sold their personal possessions to pay for their crusade, but Richard took this a step further and looked to sell his new English kingdom for the chance to capture the holy city. He raised funds by any means necessary, even allegedly selling nobles and government officials their lands and titles back. Material wealth was not a concern, and he once alledgedly quipped that he would have sold London if he could have found a buyer.



The bed-bound Baldwin IV still led the charge in 1183

In June 1191, the king of England made a grand entrance at the siege of Acre. For months now, Christian forces had been pecking away at the city's defences, and a victory here would deal a great blow to Saladin's reputation and power in the region. Thanks to Richard's renewed efforts, the city fell a little over a month later. Richard had won a great victory, but deep divisions in the crusader camp had split the army. Most notably, Philip had never shared Richard's crusading zeal and this, coupled with the hot climate and exotic diseases, saw the French contingent leave soon after Acre was conquered.

As Saladin's army had been engaging the crusaders throughout the siege, tense negotiations on prisoner transfers were taking place. This sets the scene for one of the most controversial acts of barbarism in crusading history. The hefty ransoms pushed on Saladin were more than the emir could afford at that moment, and as time drew on, many believed the lack of payment was a delaying tactic designed to keep the crusader army mired at Acre.

With rumours of the Muslims killing their Christian prisoners, Richard ordered the captured garrison, around 3,000 men, to be brought out and slaughtered in full view of the Muslim army.

Abysmal winter weather battered the army on its march to Jerusalem and made any long-term occupation of the area impossible. With his goal tantalisingly close, Richard ordered the retreat back to the coast. Jerusalem was to remain in Muslim hands, and while the Europeans had made meaningful gains along the coast, their sole objective had eluded them.

With the failure of the Third Crusade to take Jerusalem, another crusade was quickly called for, and in 1202 the Fourth Crusade was well underway. However, this proved to be an abject failure that only served to deepen the divide between the eastern and western churches.

The Fourth Crusade would cause widespread scandal in Europe for its violence against fellow Christians. The crusades, which had been started as a holy war against the Muslims and perceived Christian persecution, were now willing participants. Attacking and capturing the Christian city of Zara to pay off their great debt to Venice, Pope Innocent III flew into a rage and excommunicated the Venetians.

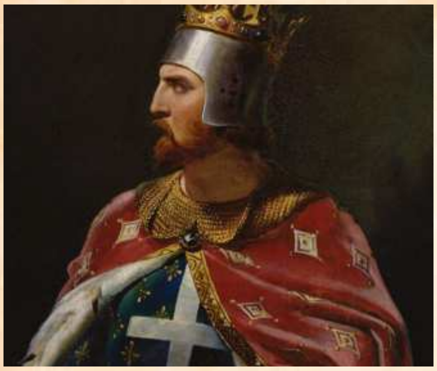
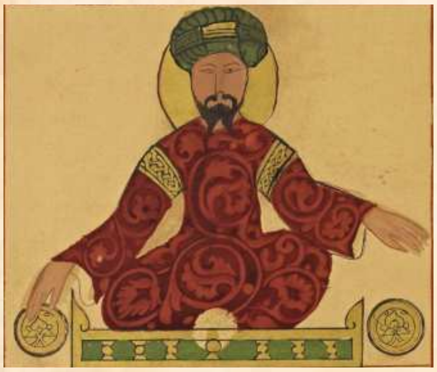
From here, the crusade swung round to Constantinople where they became embroiled in a dynastic dispute between the Byzantines. With all thought of a holy war thrown to the wayside the Christians assaulted and sacked the city when it became clear that money promised to them for helping the exiled prince take the throne would not materialise. In an orgy of destruction one of the greatest Christian cities was stripped bare of its wealth; its inhabitants subjected to horrific pillaging.

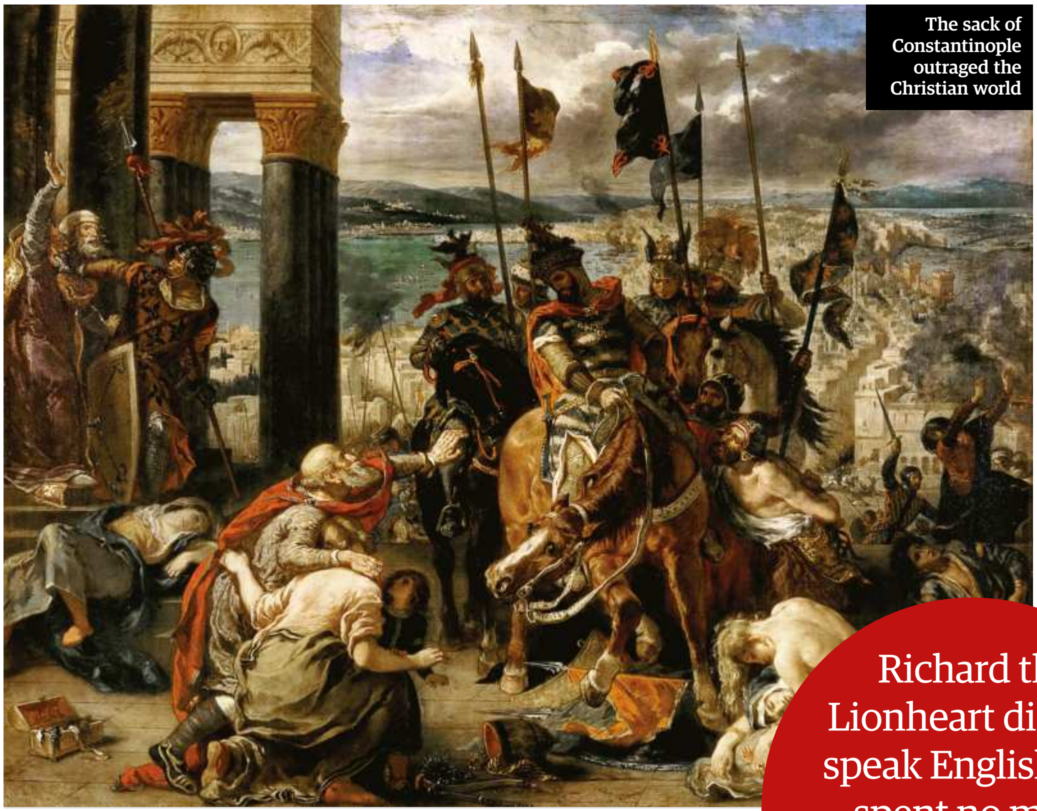
The Venetians made off with countless priceless artefacts, with the four massive metal horses now adorning St Mark's Cathedral in Venice being the most famous.

Innocent III condemned the sacking, calling out the crusaders for their barbarity, but unlike the aftermath at Zara, he did not excommunicate anyone who had taken part. He could have seen the sacking as the subsequent carving up of the Byzantine territory as a way to unify the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and heal the rift between the crusaders and the Byzantines.

Calculating the First Crusade

Both champions of their faith, how did the Third Crusade rivals compare?

	Warfare	Ruthlessness	Effectiveness
Richard 	Richard's tactical prowess meant that he lost few battles in the Middle East. By leading from the front, being brave and sharing the campaign's hardships with his men, he earned their love and respect as their military commander. Back in Europe, he was revered as a military genius, and carried the continent's hopes. ★★★★☆	Richard's massacre of the captured garrison at Acre was a barbaric and calculated act. Possibly unwilling to allocate the men and resources needed to keep them imprisoned, their execution relieved him of a humanitarian obligation, and served to solidify his fearsome reputation among the Muslim army. ★★★★☆	Despite winning many battles, Richard failed to achieve his one main objective, which was to take Jerusalem. News of rebellion and treachery from his kingdom back in northern Europe forced the king to abandon his crusade in order to keep his crown. This may have damaged morale among the crusaders. ★★★★☆
Saladin 	Saladin, a Kurdish ruler, was not as hands-on in battle as Richard was, but his strategic manoeuvring brought victory after victory for his army. As the man who recaptured Jerusalem, he was widely loved and praised in the Islamic world. Even Saladin's name was enough to strike fear into the hearts of his enemies. ★★★★☆	Although Saladin is often seen as a chivalric and merciful figure, he too had a ruthless streak in the heat of battle. As well as selling many captured Christians into a life of slavery, he also ordered the slaughtering of knights Templar and Hospitaller prisoners after the Battle of Hattin, apparently delighting in the butchery. ★★★☆☆	Ruling over both Egypt and Syria, Saladin was able to unite most of the Islamic world under one banner – though some sects, such as the Ismaili 'Assassins', still hated him. Though his exploits against the crusaders made him famous, he spent the majority of his time fighting and subduing rival Muslim rulers. ★★★☆☆



The sack of Constantinople outraged the Christian world

This view quickly faded as news of the horrific attack on the city made its way west. Attempting to keep crusading on a tight papal leash, Innocent III drew focus away from fighting pagans in France and Spain, and reoriented Europe's crusading eye once more on the Holy Land. With these fixed objectives also came the refocusing of military strategy by the Latin crusaders. It would be Egypt, not Jerusalem, that would become the target of the crusader force. His plan to take Egypt, echoed by the leaders of subsequent crusades, looked to cut off the Muslim-occupied city from its power base and take out the majority of Muslim power in the Middle East in one fell swoop. These expeditions, like the ones before, failed to achieve their goal.

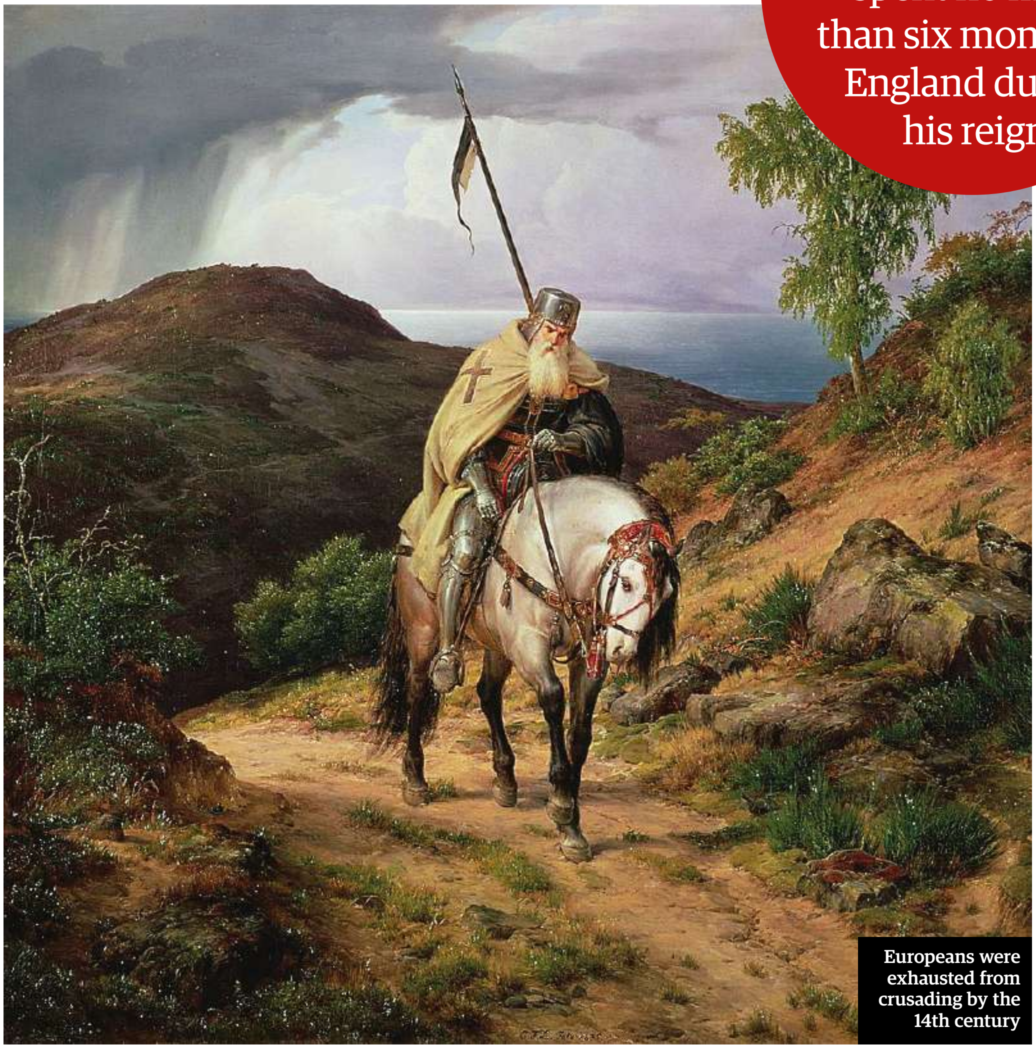
The European crusaders liked to think of themselves as superior, both martially and spiritually, to all who lived in the Holy Land. When they made the journey by land or sea, it was to bring the fight to the infidel, not to coexist nicely with them. Much to the new arrivals' chagrin, Muslim life in the crusader states continued with the sporadic European influxes.

Richard the Lionheart did not speak English and spent no more than six months in England during his reign

Latin Christians took on Arabic customs such as regular bathing, and even a poor knight or noble could wear sumptuous silks that would make a European noble's head turn. While the armies of Europe were responsible for much of the crusade's success, they also didn't aid the long-term survival of the crusader states and crusading in general. Each crusade, excluding the disastrous fourth, would see thousands of men descend on the Holy Land to wreak havoc, only for many to return home once completed. This shortage of manpower was a problem from the very first crusade, as trained military men were required to garrison the towns and castles captured in the name of Christendom. The knightly orders like the Templar and Hospitaller stepped up to fill the gaps left by the retreating Europeans, but the ebbing of men from the Holy Land slowly drained the crusader states' manpower. This ebbing of manpower was also reflected in crusading spirit.

With the frenzied zeal of the First Crusade never being quite captured again, enthusiasm for crusading dwindled over the years. The 'golden age' of crusading, led by King Richard, would never be repeated. Kings were uneasy about leaving their kingdoms for meaningful lengths of time, much like Philip II abandoning his vows to shore up his holdings in France while Richard was busy trying to capture Jerusalem. The death rattles of the crusading spirit were sounded in the 13th century, when the future Edward I of England was forced to return to Europe and leave Outremer to its fate.

With the rise of the powerful Mamluk Caliphate in Egypt, defeat after defeat soon saw the last of the Christian strongholds fall at the turn of the 14th century. The crusades, which had raged for more than 200 years in the Holy Land, were over.

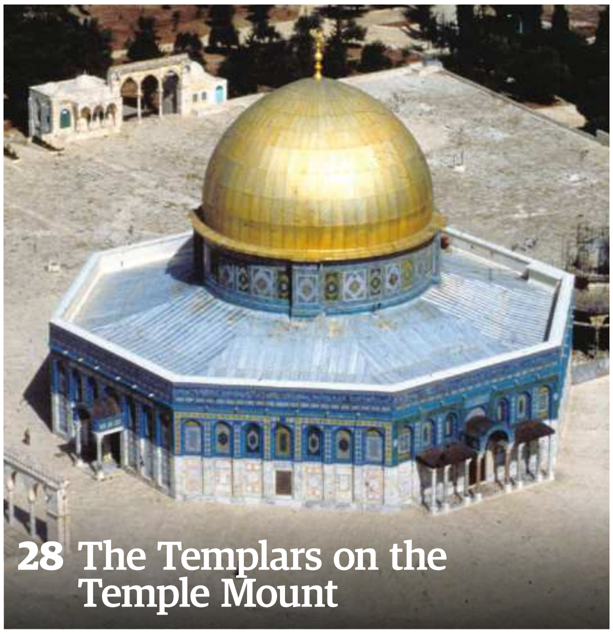


Europeans were exhausted from crusading by the 14th century

FOUNDING OF THE TEMPLARS

18 The first Templar

22 The first fighting monks



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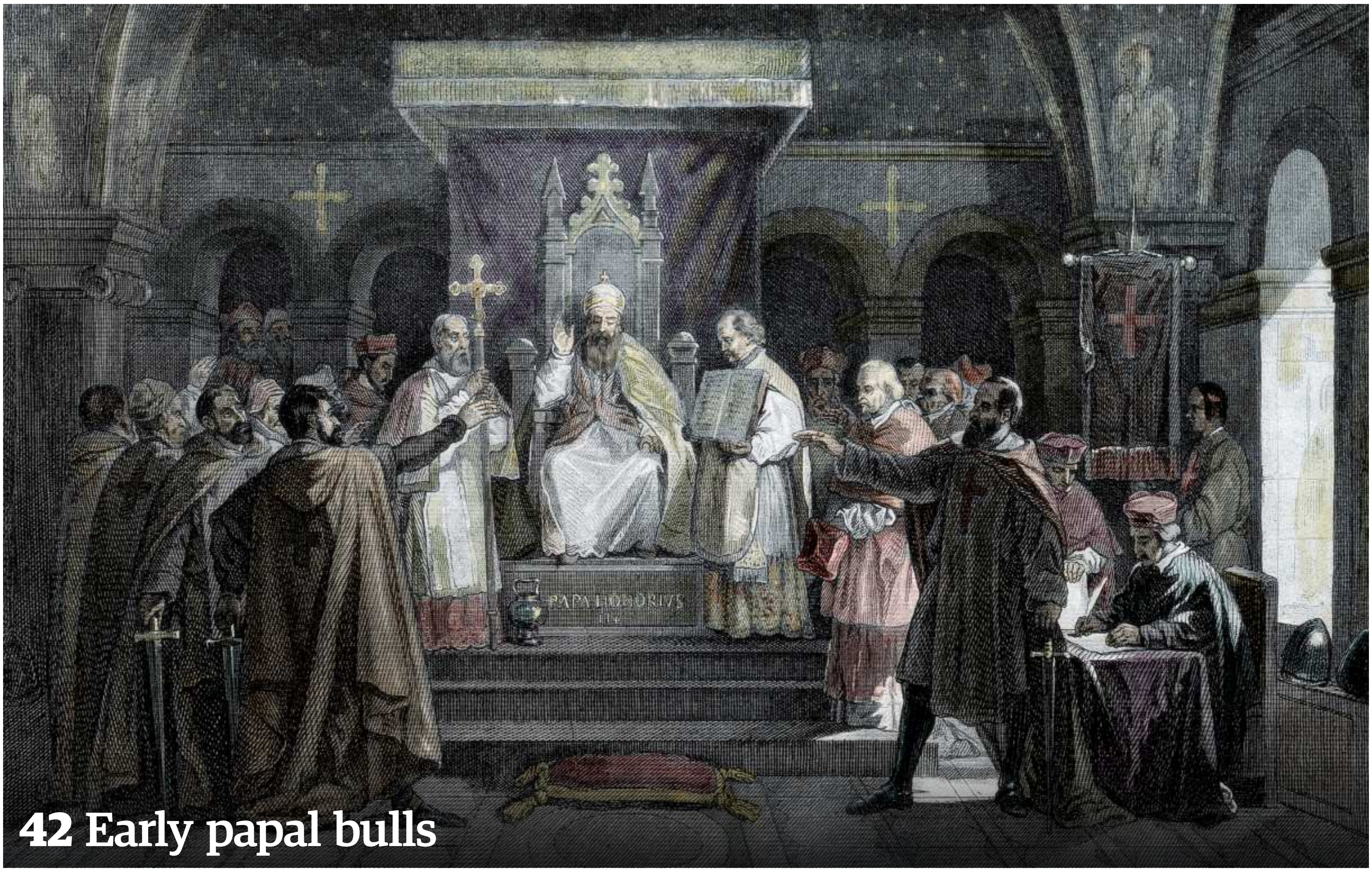

PAPA HONORIVS

42 Early papal bulls

The first Templar

Hugues de Payens founded what would become one of the most powerful forces in the Holy Land

Written by Edoardo Albert

On Christmas Day 1119, nine men prostrated themselves on the floor of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Their leader was a man named Hugues de Payens. Among the other eight were Godfrey of Saint-Omer, Geoffrey Bissot, Payen of Montdidier, André of Montbard and Archambaud of Saint-Aignan. Their prostration was the climax of the vows these men were taking; vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. These were the standard monastic vows of the Church, and there would have been little to set their vow-taking apart from those professed by thousands of other monks if not for the name by which they proposed to call their confraternity: 'The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ'. For these nine men were swearing their lives to Christ and their swords to the protection of their fellow Christians in the Holy Land, the newly conquered realm of Outremer (the Crusader states).

But, at the time, barely anyone noticed. There was no chronicler writing down an account of what happened. We don't even have a complete list of the names of all nine men. Indeed, there might have been as many as 30 men lying on the floor of the holiest church in Christendom that Christmas Day. The sources - which were all written much later than the events they claim to record - disagree. This is hardly surprising. The 12th century was a time of extraordinary monastic renewal, with new orders springing up all over Europe. Some lasted a few years, others a few decades; some continue to this day. But it was hardly unusual that a group of men should be making vows before God, and only the people present in the church at the time would have paid it any heed - then as speedily forgotten all about it when they emerged, blinking, into the cold clear light of a winter's day in Jerusalem.

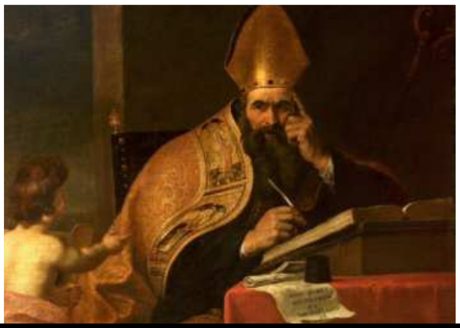
The leader of these Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ was born, probably in Payens, some time around 1070. Almost nothing is known of Hugues' early life. However, he was clearly a member of the knightly, noble caste, for his name appears, appended as a signatory, to a number of charters (documents recording the transfer of land or privileges) pertaining to the estates and properties around Payens.

Payens, now known as Payns, lies on the River Seine, downstream from Troyes and 130 kilometres (80 miles) south-east of Paris. Hugues de Payens was probably one of the knights of another Hugues, the count of Champagne, who ruled his principality from his seat at Troyes. Hugues of Champagne was both pious and unhappily married - a situation calculated to make a man take up the cross, which is exactly what Hugues of Champagne did. Twice. First in 1104, spending four years in Outremer, and then again in 1114. While we don't know if Hugues de Payens accompanied his overlord Hugues on his first journey to the Holy Land, it seems highly likely

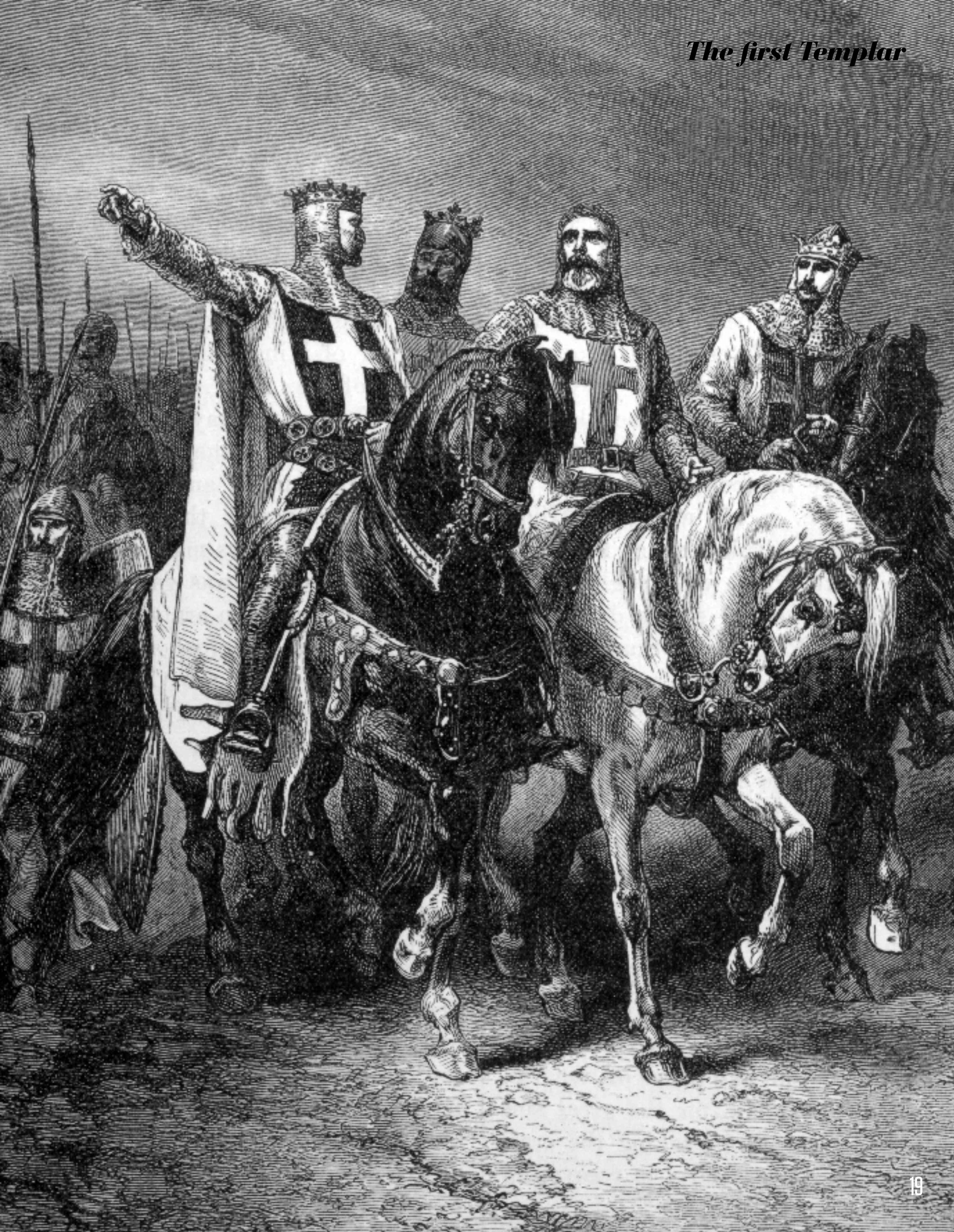
Swords or ploughshares?

How the Christian Church found a way to justify violence

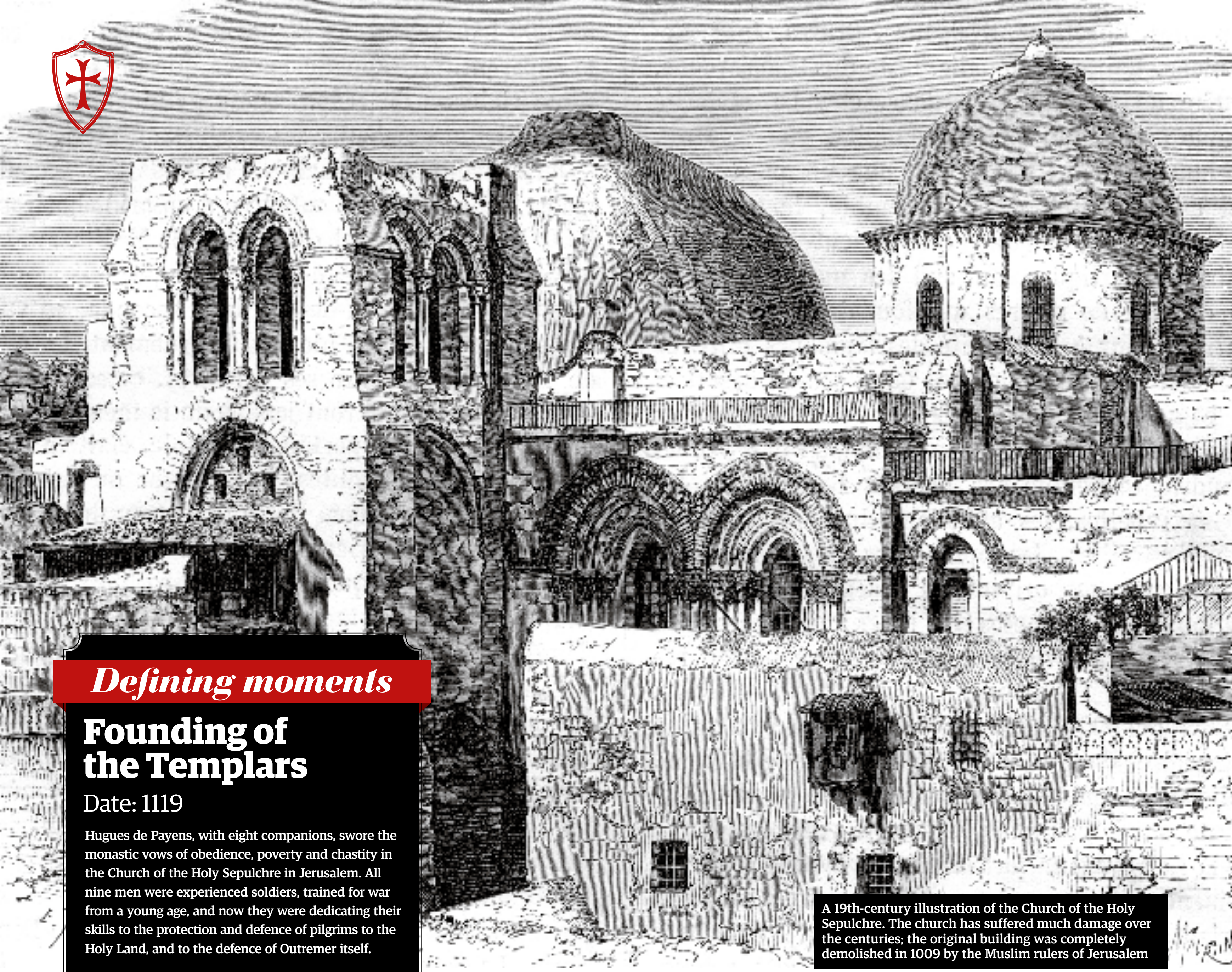
Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" **(Matthew 26:52). At the heart of Christianity was an admonition to non-violence and an example from its founder of accepting violence, even to death, rather than retaliating. In the early centuries, that was the practice followed by Christians, who accepted death by martyrdom at the hands of the Roman state. But when that state placed itself into the hands of Christian emperors, starting with Constantine, the Church was faced with a dilemma: how could a state function if it didn't retaliate to deadly force? Augustine, in the fifth century, argued that a just war was possible in defence of a properly constituted state; indeed, that inaction in the face of grave wrongdoing was in itself a sin. When the Church spread to the martial barbarian cultures of northern Europe, it found itself having to deal with a warrior elite, which found in warfare its essential expression. Attempting to control and channel the endemic violence of such a society caused the Church to seek an avenue to which these violent men could be turned. It found the answer in the appeal, coming from Constantinople, to come to the defence of the Holy Land.**



Augustine of Hippo (354-430), the most influential of the Church Fathers and the man who invented the spiritual autobiography



The first Templar



A 19th-century illustration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The church has suffered much damage over the centuries; the original building was completely demolished in 1009 by the Muslim rulers of Jerusalem

Defining moments

Founding of the Templars

Date: 1119

Hugues de Payens, with eight companions, swore the monastic vows of obedience, poverty and chastity in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. All nine men were experienced soldiers, trained for war from a young age, and now they were dedicating their skills to the protection and defence of pilgrims to the Holy Land, and to the defence of Outremer itself.

Recruiting to the Order

Date: 1128

The Order grew only slowly in its first few years. However, when Hugues de Payens travelled back to Europe - to France, England and Scotland - he recruited many men to the Order, as well as securing its finances with the gifts of estates and incomes in Europe. The future of the Order was secure for the time being, apart from one thing: it needed a Rule.

Taking a Rule

Date: 1129

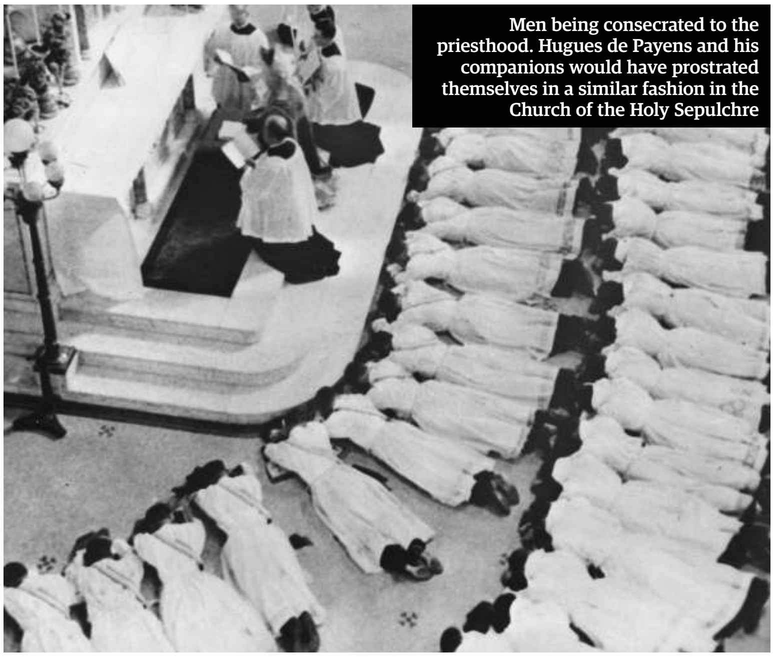
At a Church council in Troyes, France, over which Pope Honorius II presided, the Order was both approved by the Church and a Rule for its governance and the conduct of its soldier monks worked out and promulgated. The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon was now an official Order of the Church.

that he went with him on the second trip. But when the count of Champagne returned to France and his loveless marriage, Hugues de Payens remained behind in Outremer. With his companion, Godfrey of Saint-Omer, Hugues came up with the idea of founding a fraternity of knights that would follow the religious Rule (essentially, a monastic manual, regulating the lives of monks) of Augustine of Hippo while seeking to protect the stream of Christian pilgrims coming to the Holy Land in the wake of its liberation from Muslim conquerors.

It is not hard to see why Hugues and his companions thought that this was necessary and useful. Although the First Crusade had succeeded against all odds in capturing Jerusalem in 1099 - and founding the kingdoms of Outremer, Jerusalem itself, the County of Tripoli, the Principality of Antioch and the County of Edessa - the Holy Land was by no means secured. In response to the success of the Crusade, hundreds if not thousands of Christian pilgrims started to make their way to the Holy Land, but the journey there, whether overland or by ship, was perilous, and never more perilous than when they actually arrived in Palestine. The most common pilgrim route was to take ship to Caesarea or Jaffa on the coast before taking the roads inland to Jerusalem, but the tracks through the Judaean Hills were rife with Saracen marauders and brigands. Pilgrims who went unarmed, seeking to follow in the footsteps of Christ, were all too likely to be killed or taken as slaves. Indeed, events earlier in 1119 may well have served to convince Hugues of the necessity for this military monastic order.

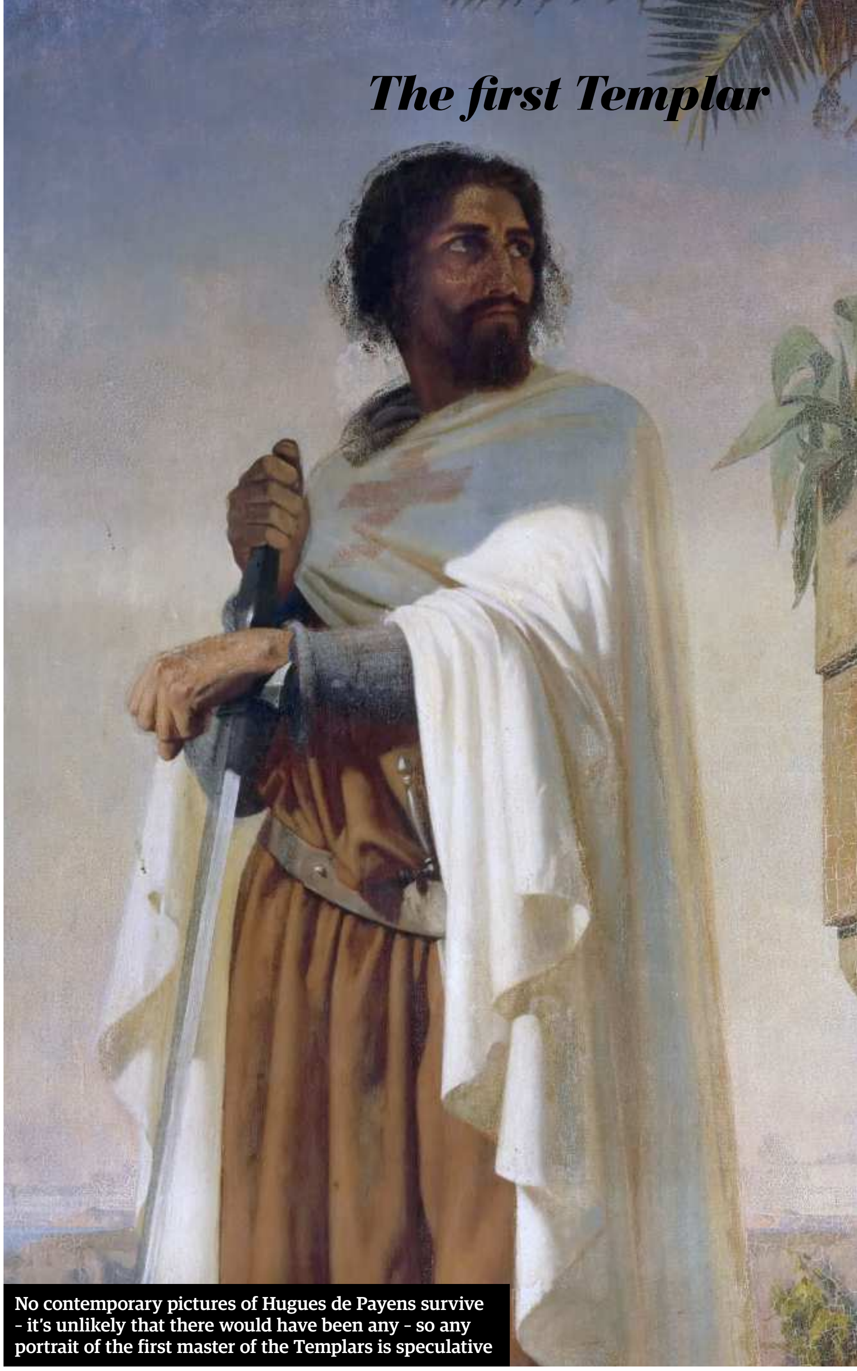
On Easter Saturday 1119, which in that year took place on 29 March, pilgrims had gathered in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the solemn vigil that accompanied Christ's journey into Hell following his Crucifixion, in order to free the souls of those held there. Pilgrims still gather in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Holy Saturday and, like those waiting on 29 March 1119, they are waiting for the miracle of the Holy Fire. This is when an unlit lamp placed upon the rock where Christ's body was laid bursts spontaneously into flame. The patriarch of Jerusalem then emerges from the tomb, bearing a taper lit from the new fire, and lights the candles of the pilgrims waiting in the dark church. There are, of course, both

A pilgrim receiving the holy fire during the Easter vigil at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre



Men being consecrated to the priesthood. Hugues de Payens and his companions would have prostrated themselves in a similar fashion in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

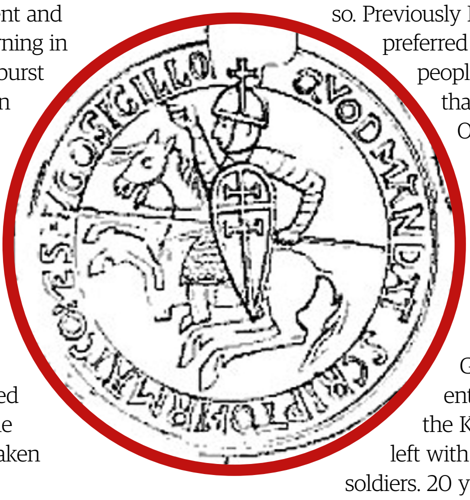
The first Templar



No contemporary pictures of Hugues de Payens survive - it's unlikely that there would have been any - so any portrait of the first master of the Templars is speculative

sceptical denunciations and pious defences, but its importance in history is its continuation. On 29 March 1119, only 20 years after the recapture of Jerusalem, the assembled pilgrims in the church, having witnessed the event and seeing the new flame burning in their lamps and candles, burst from the church, intent on seeking a new baptism in the River Jordan. The river lies 32 kilometres (20 miles) east of the city, so it required a real outpouring of religious fervour to think to make it that far. But none of them made it. Many hundreds were killed by Muslim raiders, and the few who survived were taken as slaves.

The Crusade had been launched in part because of the increasing dangers of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land when it had been under Muslim rule. Now, even though Jerusalem was in Christian hands, it must have seemed that pilgrimage was no safer than it had been before. Indeed, it seemed less so. Previously Muslim bandits would have preferred to turn a profit by taking people to be sold as slaves rather than killing them.



Outremer trembled on the brink of perpetual war, its rulers always hampered by a chronic lack of manpower. Despite the rapture of taking Jerusalem, most of the men who had survived to take the city decided to return home. Godfrey of Bouillon, the man entrusted with safeguarding the Kingdom of Jerusalem, was left with 300 knights and 1,000 foot soldiers. 20 years later, under the new king of Jerusalem, Baldwin II, the manpower situation remained desperate. Many hundreds of trained knights had come as pilgrims to the Holy Land in the two decades since the capture of Jerusalem, but once their pilgrimage was completed, there was no obvious avenue by which they could use their skills in the way that would best serve the kingdom: through their martial training.

Hugues of Payens, though, did not return home once his pilgrimage was complete. In company with other knights, he took to hanging around at the place that was the obvious centre of their world: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. There Hugues met other knights, who had witnessed the perilous situation in Outremer, and were similarly looking for a way to make a difference. Given the importance always placed upon Hugues in later accounts, we must assume that it was he who first came up with the idea of a military confraternity to protect pilgrims and the holy places. In light of the 29 March 1119 massacre, the need for such an order was all too obvious. So, with his eight companions, Hugues received permission from Gerard, the Prior of the Holy Sepulchre, that they might make their vows in the most sacred church in Christendom. The Order of The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ had begun.

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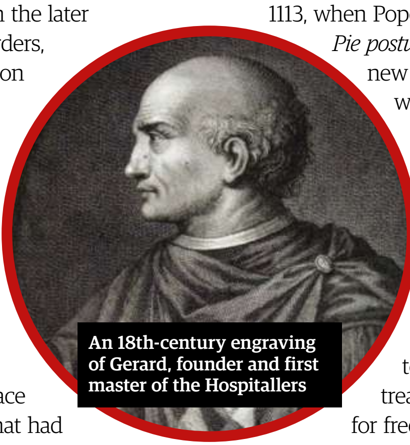
The first fighting monks

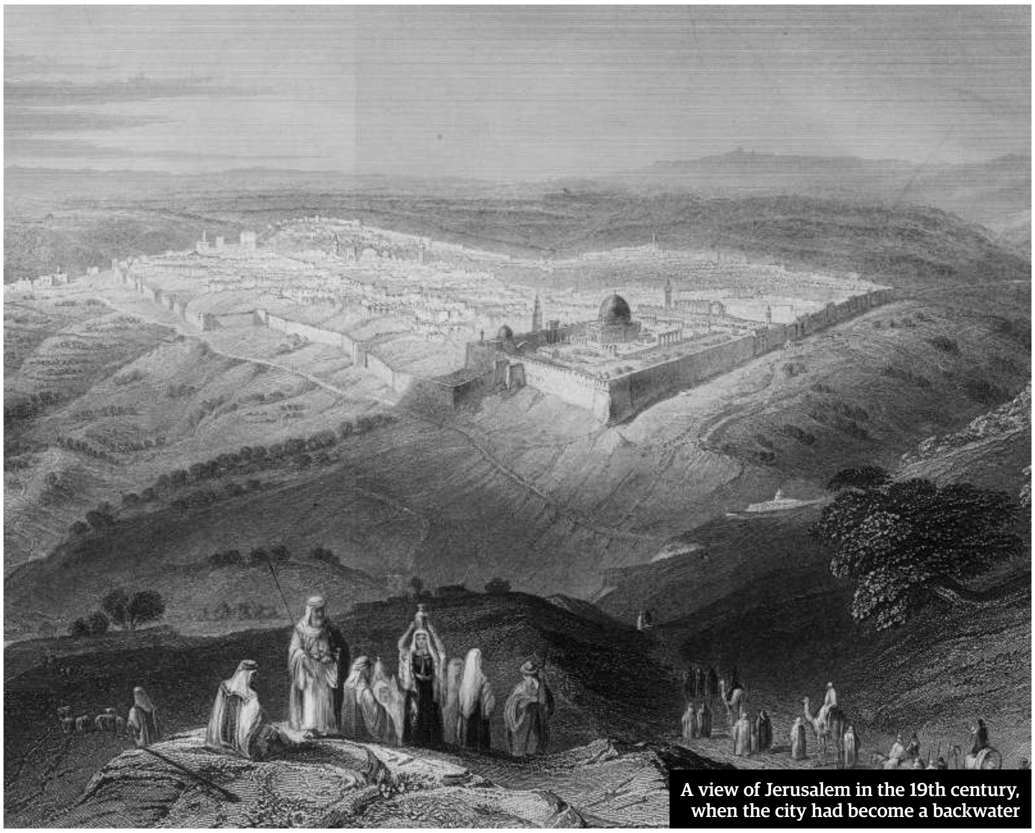
The origins of the Knights Templar are shrouded in obscurity, but what is clear is the pressing danger that was facing the kingdom where they were founded

Written by Edoardo Albert

The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ were, in their early days, poor indeed. The symbol they took for their new order was that of two knights both sitting astride the same horse: it was an accurate representation of their poverty. Hugues de Payens, the first grand master of the order, and his eight fellow knights had to rely on handouts from the Prior of the Holy Sepulchre so that they might feed themselves. Ironically, given the later history of rivalry between the orders, Hugues and his men also relied on leftovers from the Hospitallers.


An 18th-century engraving of Gerard, founder and first master of the Hospitallers

At the time, the Hospital of St John was just that, a hospital and infirmary dedicated to the care of sick and ailing pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem. The hospital was situated on the site of the monastery of St John the Baptist. It predated the conquest of Jerusalem, having been established in 1023 to replace the previous pilgrim's hospital that had been destroyed by the Caliph Al-Hakim in 1005. In 1080, Gerard, a lay Benedictine brother, was given charge of the Hospital of St John. When Jerusalem was besieged in 1099 by the soldiers of the First Crusade, the Fatimid governor, Iftikhar al-Dawla, expelled all the Christians in the city. However, he allowed Gerard and a handful of other brothers to stay at the hospital so that they could care for the sick and injured. Following Jerusalem's fall to the Crusaders, Gerard and the Hospital of St John tended to the crusaders injured in the fighting, and a number of them decided to join the order and care for other sick and injured pilgrims. In gratitude for his work, Godfrey of Bouillon, the new ruler of Jerusalem, gave to Gerard and the brothers of St John additional benefices so that the hospital soon outstripped its parent organisation. To regularise the situation, the hospital was recognised as an independent religious order on 15 February 1113, when Pope Paschal II issued a papal bull, *Pie postulatio voluntatis*, putting the new order under his protection, which freed it from the control of the patriarch of Jerusalem, giving it the right to elect its grand master without outside interference, and requiring of its brothers the vows to poverty, chastity and obedience. By the end of the century, the hospital had grown to such an extent that it could treat 1,000 patients – which it did, for free – admitting everyone without regard for religion or nationality. But as part of its remit to care for pilgrims, and with a large number of trained military men among its brothers, the Hospital of St John soon began providing armed escorts for parties of pilgrims making the difficult and dangerous journey from Jerusalem to the port of Jaffa. The change from a medical order to a military/medical one was gradual, but it was formalised under the second grand master of the order, Raymond of Puys, who was elected in 1121. It


A view of Jerusalem in the 19th century, when the city had become a backwater

was Raymond who organised the order into knights, men-at-arms and chaplains so that it became the Order of Knights of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, or the Knights Hospitaller.

As with the early years of the Knights Templar, there is very little historical evidence for exactly how this change came about. Given how two similar orders of military monks came into being at the same time and in the same place, there was clearly both a local need - the parlous security of the Kingdom of Jerusalem - and a cultural and practical readiness for such institutions to come into being, through the presence of a reasonable number of highly trained, pious knights looking to put their skills to the service of Christ and his Church.

The Hospitallers had the initial advantage as their foundation sprang from one of the typical wellsprings of Christian monasticism, the care for the sick (the Hospitallers called their patients "our lords, the sick"), and they could call upon the endowments given to them by Godfrey and his successor kings. Hugues de Payens and his companions were called upon to trust in God and to live on charity in the order's early days. It seems to have been a hand-to-mouth and often frustrating experience. A later chronicler said that the warriors hanging around at the Holy Sepulchre often ended up drinking and wasting their time. While Hugues de Payens had received permission from Gerard, the prior of the Holy Sepulchre, to form his confraternity of confessed knights, he needed greater recognition before they could start to put their skills to the service of Outremer: he needed the blessing of the king and the patriarch.

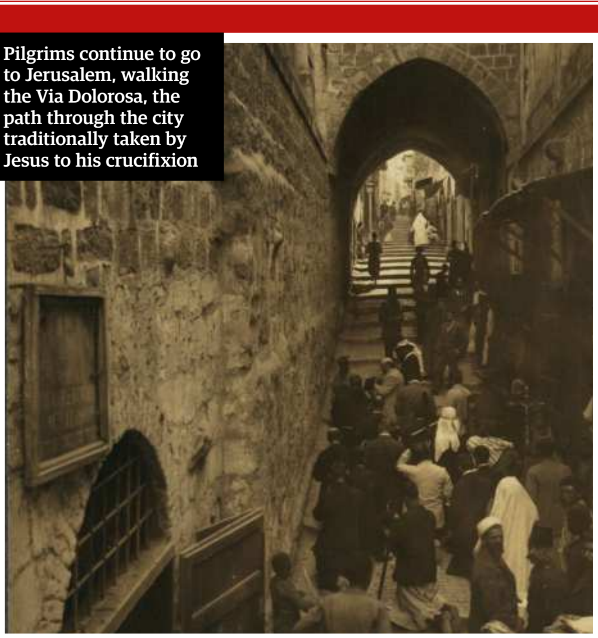
Baldwin II was the third ruler of the kingdom of Jerusalem, crowned on 14 April 1118, following his cousins, Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin of Boulogne. The patriarch of Jerusalem, the leading churchman of Outremer, was Warmund, who had similarly succeeded to the patriarchate in 1118. In response to the crises and difficulties besetting the kingdom, king and patriarch called a council that convened in Nablus, 48 kilometres (30 miles) north of Jerusalem, on 16 January 1120. According to the world view of the Crusaders, and indeed that of their Muslim foes, the changes of fortunes of the kingdoms of Outremer could be explained by how closely they adhered to God's commands. Should they slip into sin and iniquity, then God would punish them, as he had chastised the Israelites when they broke their covenant with him.

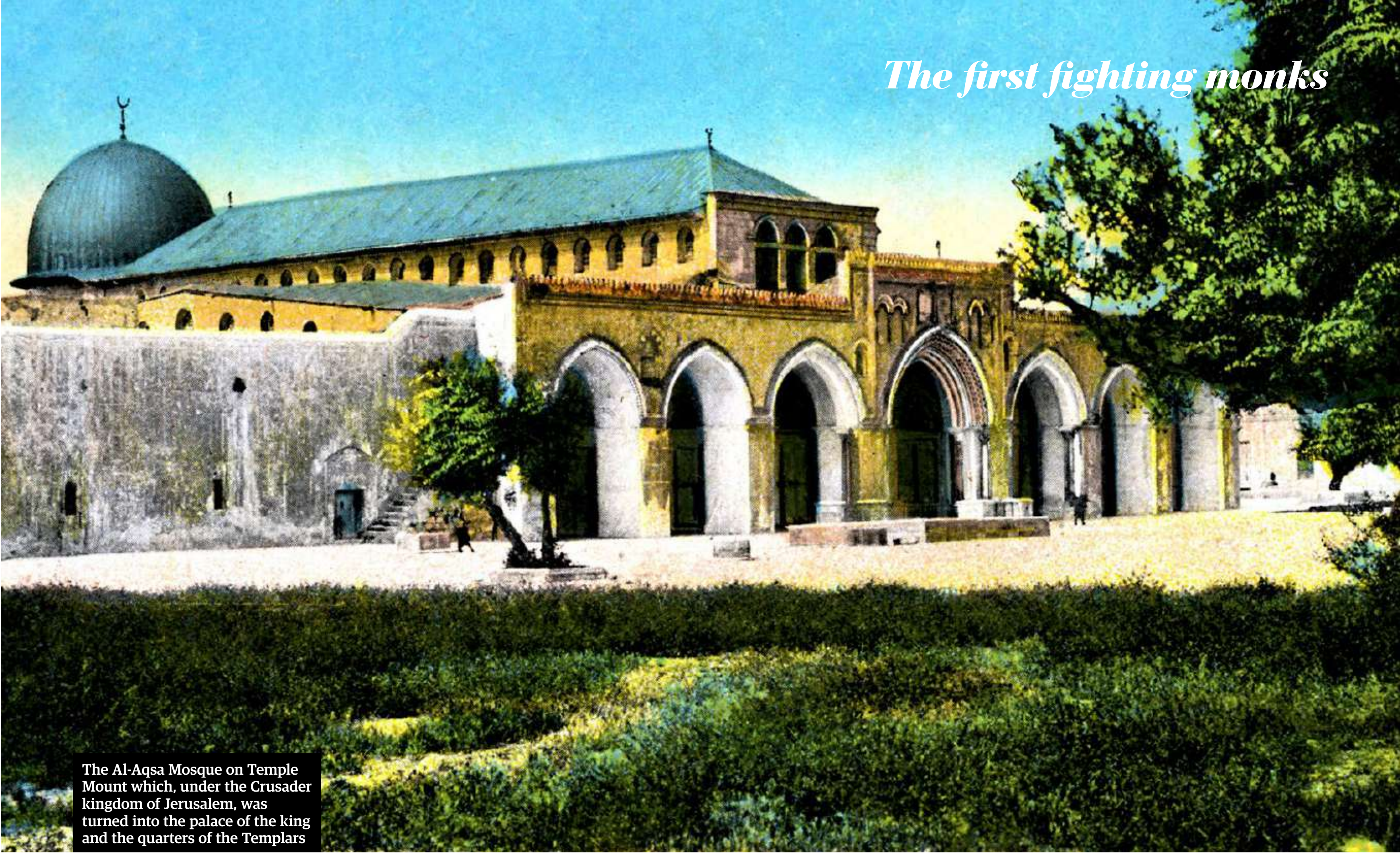
While most of the statutes of the council dealt with returning the inhabitants of Outremer to good relations with God, the 20th canon of the council states: 'If a cleric should bring arms for the sake of defence, let him not be held culpable'. The rest of the canon implies that the taking up of arms by a religious cleric would be temporary, but this statement allowing them to bear arms at all was significant: previously, the Church and secular law alike forbade priests or monks from doing so, even to defend themselves.

Pilgrim hardships

Devout travellers faced many dangers en route

The conquest of Jerusalem opened the Holy Land to Christian pilgrims in a way that it had not been for centuries, and many set out on pilgrimage in the years immediately following the successful completion of the First Crusade. One of the first of these was an Englishman called Sæwulf, who wrote a fascinating account of his travels and adventures. Pilgrimage was hugely popular during the Middle Ages, and as *The Canterbury Tales* attests, there were many motivations beyond the pious for making such journeys, but Sæwulf was a serious pilgrim, who "though conscious of my unworthiness, went to offer up my prayers at the Holy Sepulchre." Having already made his way to Italy, Sæwulf took a ship from Monopoli, near Bari in the heel of Italy, on 13 July 1102 - and was wrecked the same day. Undaunted, Sæwulf embarked again and, through storms and difficulties, and many stops along the way, arrived at the port of Jaffa. It had taken 13 weeks to sail from Italy to Palestine. Eager to get ashore, Sæwulf and his companions hired a boat to take them from their ship, which was just as well. Overnight, a storm blew in and wrecked the ships at anchor, drowning 1,000 people. On the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, Sæwulf saw the bodies of people who had been killed by the many bandits who lurked in the hills. When he reached Jerusalem, Sæwulf visited all the holy sites of the city before travelling through the rest of Palestine, although many of the churches and monasteries had been destroyed by the Saracens, with Bethlehem having been laid to waste. Having "visited and paid our devotion at all the holy places in the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding country," Sæwulf returned to Jaffa, embarking on his return journey on 17 May 1108 after being in Palestine for nearly six years.


Pilgrims continue to go to Jerusalem, walking the Via Dolorosa, the path through the city traditionally taken by Jesus to his crucifixion

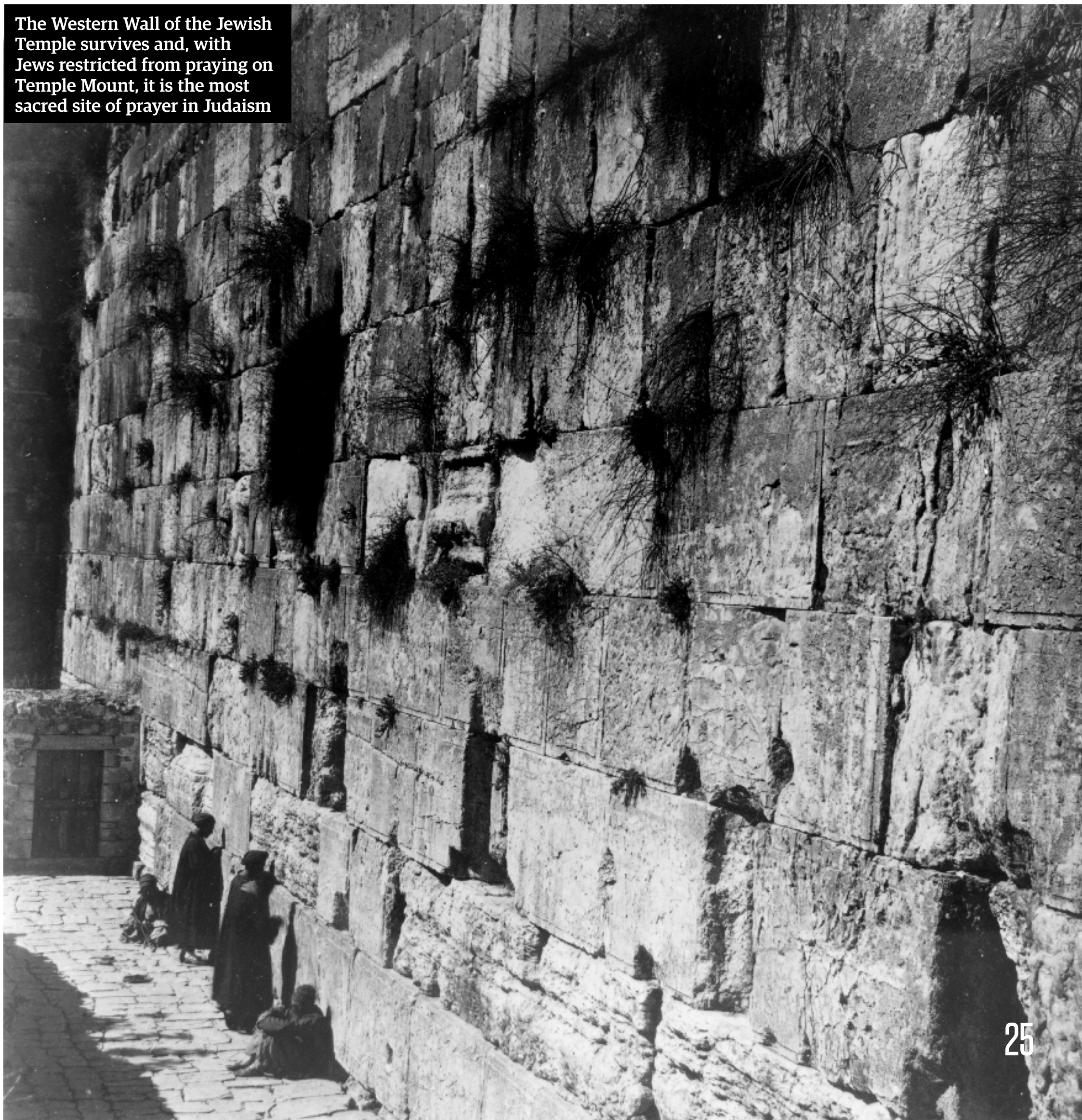


The Al-Aqsa Mosque on Temple Mount which, under the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, was turned into the palace of the king and the quarters of the Templars

Although not included in the published canons of the council, it's likely that another item of business was the presentation to the king and patriarch by an itinerant knight, Hugues de Payens, seeking permission for his confraternity of professed knights to wield arms for the protection of pilgrims and the defence of Outremer while remaining vowed to poverty, chastity and obedience.

In fact, an alternative reading of the opaque evidence for this period would suggest that the original intention of Hugues and his companions was to form an order similar to that of the Hospital of St John and care for pilgrims, but that it was Baldwin II himself who persuaded Hugues and his men to keep their swords so they might serve the kingdom where it had greatest need. Certainly, once he knew of the order, Baldwin II favoured it, providing Hugues and his companions with their first proper chapter house: a wing of his own palace.

But what a palace. There is a reason that Jerusalem's history is so long and bloody. Medieval maps place the city at the centre of the world, making it the fulcrum of history, and the hinge upon which that fulcrum turns is Temple Mount. Jerusalem is a city of hills, and Temple Mount is one of these hills. It was where King Solomon built the first Temple. After that was destroyed by the Babylonians, the Temple was rebuilt, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. It is here where Jews still turn to prayer, and to the Foundation Stone that lies in the centre of Temple Mount; the world's centre. But over the Foundation Stone is the glittering gold roof of the Dome of the Rock, Islam's third most holy shrine, which is said to mark the location from which Muhammad made his Night



The Western Wall of the Jewish Temple survives and, with Jews restricted from praying on Temple Mount, it is the most sacred site of prayer in Judaism

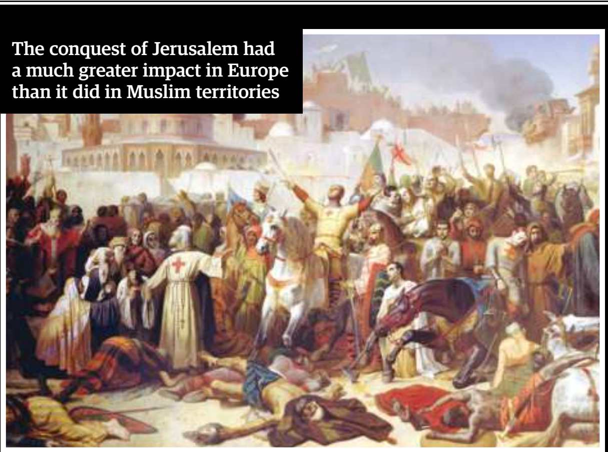
Local views

How Christian fighters exploited a divided power

While there is much talk of the impact of the Crusades on Christian-Muslim relations, there is very little evidence that the First Crusade registered strongly within the Islamic world. The conquest of Jerusalem is barely mentioned in contemporary Muslim sources.

At the time, the Muslim world was far more concerned with its internal divisions - conflicts that also facilitated the conquest of Palestine and the continuance of Outremer - than with Christians. They tended to identify Christians as Byzantines, who they were well used to negotiating with, rather than as strangers to the intricate power arrangements of the Levant.

The Fatimid caliphate, based in Egypt, which was Shia, was in opposition to the Abbasid caliphate that had itself fractured into regional powers, while the incoming Seljuk Turks, while slowly increasing in power, were themselves divided. Such political fracturing made for banditry and brigandage on the local level, and uncertainty on the political level, an uncertainty the new Crusader states sought to exploit as much as possible.



The conquest of Jerusalem had a much greater impact in Europe than it did in Muslim territories

Journey to Heaven. On the southern side of Temple Mount is the Al-Aqsa Mosque, built on the site of a small prayer house that the Caliph Umar built on Temple Mount following his conquest of Jerusalem in 637. It was this mosque that Baldwin had converted into a palace, and he gave part of it over to Hugues de Payens and his companions for their chapter house. Among the Crusaders, the Al-Aqsa was known as the Temple of Solomon, so the order that lived there became known as 'The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ and the Temple of Solomon', then 'The Knights of the Temple of Solomon' which became simplified to 'The Knights of the Temple', from which derives 'Knights Templar' or, simplest of all, 'The Temple'.

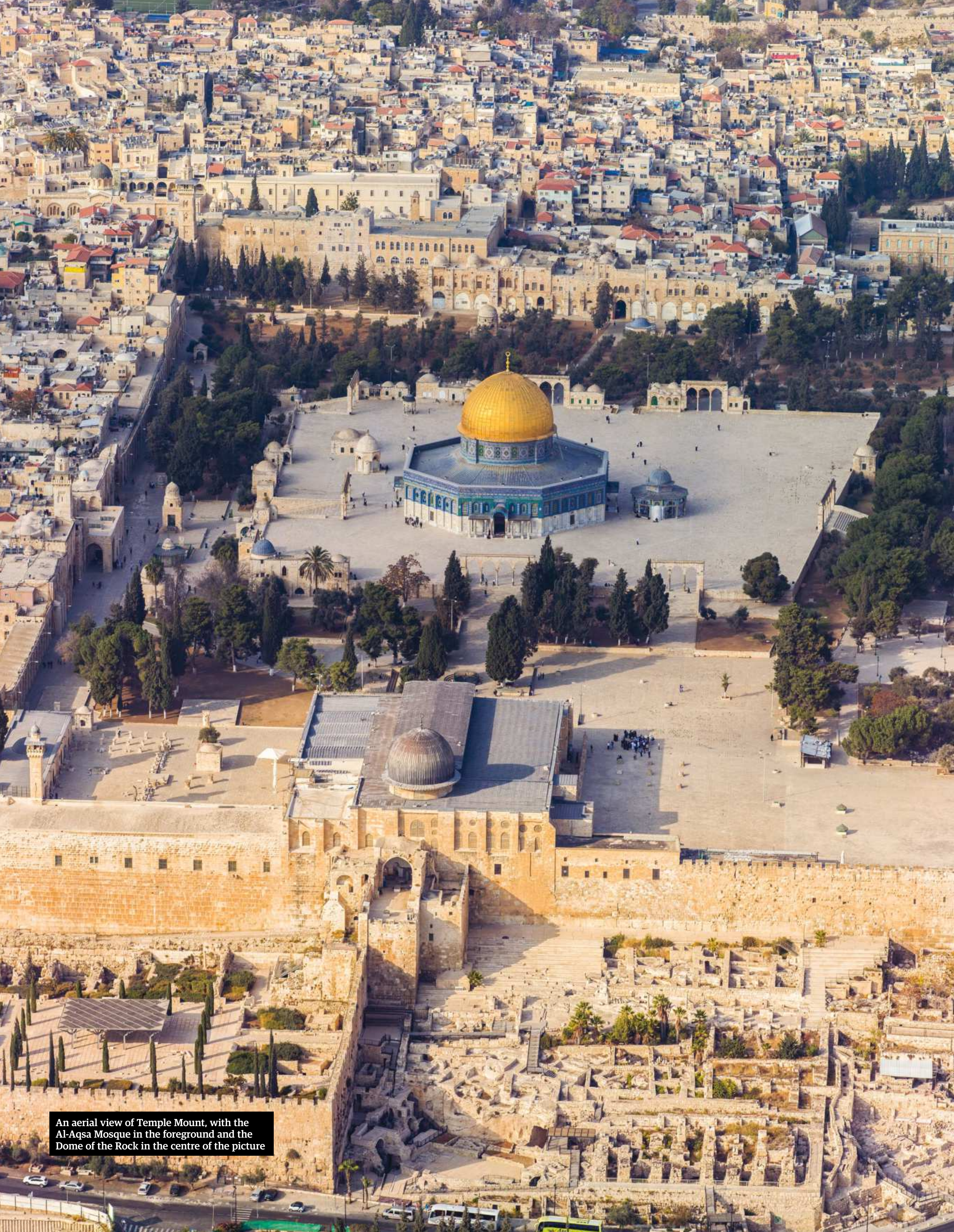
The first knights of the Temple seem to have been known and/or related to Hugues de Payens. This was quite normal. Careful historical analysis has shown that crusading tended to be family affairs, with generations of men from the same lineage taking the cross, while other leading families contented themselves with affairs closer to home. Nor did it generally have anything to do with younger sons without an inheritance looking for an arena in which they could make their fortunes and their names. The evidence on this is clear: it was generally the leading members of houses who went on crusade, a venture that required a huge commitment of financial resources as well as many years away from home and the real risk of death. Such an undertaking required the support of the family as a whole, and this commitment endured through the generations, lingering longest in those families who had given most, in lives and money, to the whole enterprise.

But while the Templars had a home, they still didn't have many men. Hugues de Payens would waylay any likely pilgrim, seeking to persuade him to either forswear the world and his home to take up arms in defence of the holy city or, at the least, to agree to serve with the Temple for a few years. Chroniclers also confirm that the Templars were still living a hand-to-mouth existence, with plain clothes - this was a time when wealth was displayed most obviously in clothing - and a meagre diet.

In 1125, the Knights of the Temple of Solomon received their most important new recruit to date: Hugues, count of Champagne. It was to his namesake that Hugues de Payens was originally bound as a knight, Payens being an estate in the province of Champagne. It was likely that Hugues had first travelled to the Holy Land with the count of Champagne, remaining when his lord returned to France. And it was to the Holy Land that the count of Champagne returned for a third and final time in 1125. Hugues had had an unhappy marriage. Convinced of the infidelity of his wife, he had in the end repudiated the one son that their marriage had produced, convinced that the boy was not his, and settled his titles upon his nephew. Having relinquished the title of Count of Champagne, Hugues travelled to Jerusalem and entered the Temple. Although Hugues had relinquished his titles, the connections and prestige that accrued from having one of the great magnates of France become a Templar would have redounded to the order's great benefit. Within the values of the 12th century, it showed that the knights were an outfit to be ranked high in the social orders of the time.

But even with the ex-count of Champagne among their number, the Knights of the Temple still struggled to attract sufficient men to follow what they considered their calling. This may, in part, have been due to the formal difficulty many men still found in the idea of a religious bearing arms. To really succeed as an order, the knights needed the wholehearted backing of the Church, and not just its tacit approval. To that end, it was fortunate that one of the most influential churchmen of the day was both friend and counsellor to the count of Champagne and the nephew of one of the original knightly companions of Hugues de Payens. That churchman was named Bernard, and his part in the foundation of The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ and the Temple of Solomon is examined later on in this book.

The Western Wall showing its position relative to the Dome of the Rock. The Israeli government forbids non-Muslim prayer on the Temple Mount itself



An aerial view of Temple Mount, with the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the foreground and the Dome of the Rock in the centre of the picture

The Templars on the Temple Mount

The Templars' headquarters in Jerusalem were on the Temple Mount, or Noble Sanctuary, site of the city's most beautiful and enigmatic building, the Muslim shrine of the Dome of the Rock

Written by Robin Griffith-Jones

The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, finished in 692 CE, has got to be one of the loveliest buildings in the world. It is set on the vast esplanade - part natural, part man-made - that overlooks the whole city of Jerusalem. The esplanade is known to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif - 'the Noble Sanctuary' - and to Jews and Christians, it's known as the Temple Mount. On it, over centuries, the Jewish Temple was built, destroyed, rebuilt, desecrated, renewed, massively extended - and then destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. It has never been rebuilt since.

Robin Griffith-Jones

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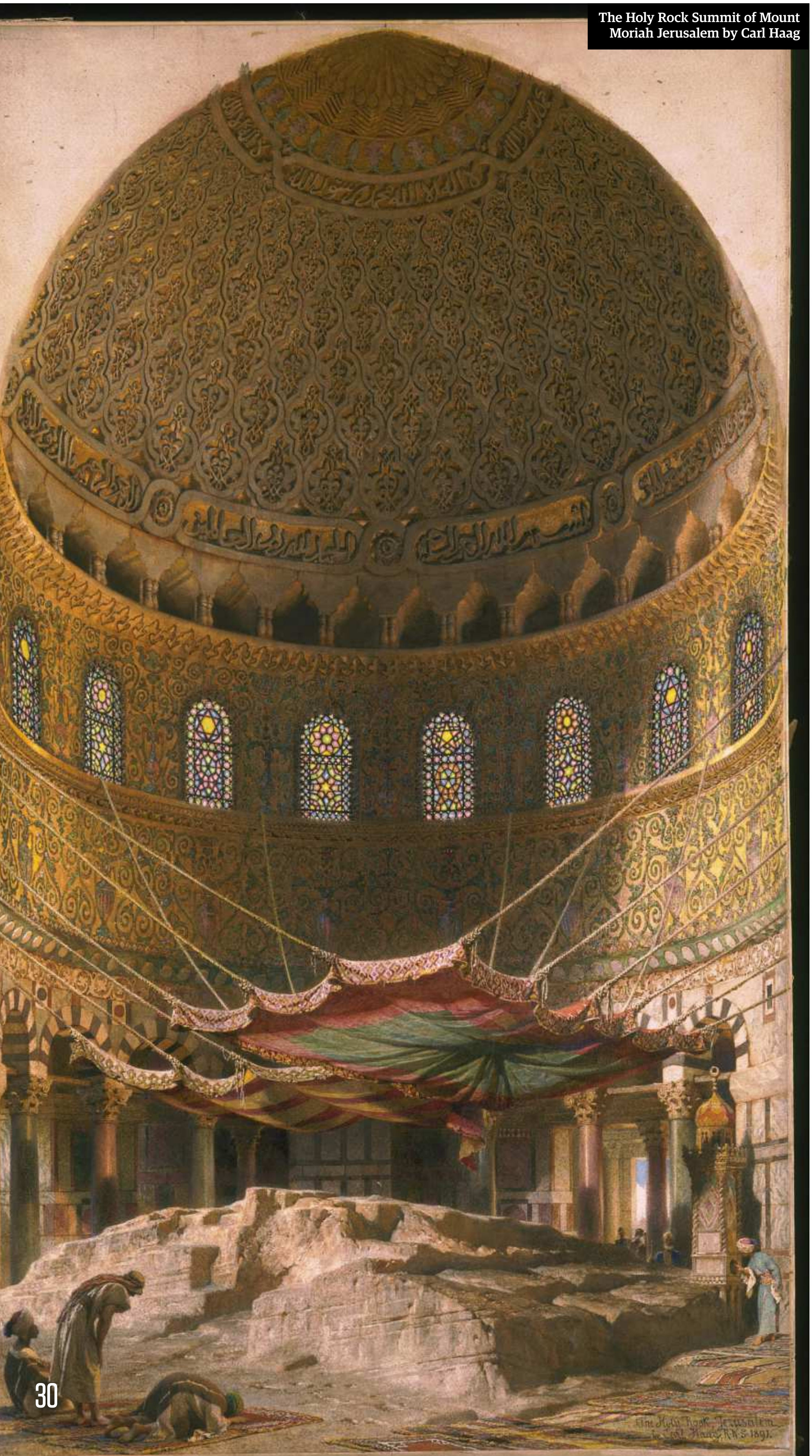
Jerusalem is and has always been a labyrinth of walkways and markets and small squares; modest and bustling and maximising available shade. Above them all, in Jerusalem's blazing sunlight, the Dome rises from the white paving of the esplanade as an extension of white stone below an other-worldly vision of blues and turquoise. On the ground floor it is a perfect octagon: less severe than a square yet more clearly articulated than a circle. Above its central space soars an inner, circular drum supporting the golden dome that defines the city's skyline. If ever a building stood halfway between our messy, irregular world and the transcendent vault of heaven - and united the two in one man-made masterpiece - it is the Dome of the Rock.

Walk inside, and the sunlight will once have given way to the light of hundreds, even thousands, of lamps and candles. Some were beeswax, others were so beautifully perfumed that pilgrims could imagine anointing themselves and their clothes with the oil. The crusaders were said by one Arabic commentator to have stripped the Dome of 40 large silver candelabra, a vast silver lantern, 150 smaller silver candelabra and 20 golden candelabra. That central lantern alone had held 500 lamps. The friar Felix Fabri saw the Dome from across Jerusalem when it was back in Muslim hands in 1483: the building "shone as brightly as if it were a lantern filled with clear flame." Columns and vaults broke up the light into reflective, shimmering pools. Mosaics glinted from every surface. Here were the lovely, sinuous patterns of the plants of paradise stylised into pure geometric forms: a perfect, ordered beauty realising within creation the Creator's infinite wisdom. The sensory impact of the was overwhelming: saturated in colour, richly perfumed, textured with metalwork,

The Dome of the Rock, as viewed from the air



The Holy Rock Summit of Mount Moriah Jerusalem by Carl Haag

marble and Persian carpets – softened by 8,000 new floor-mats every year.

(We are indebted throughout this piece to Professor Robert Hillenbrand. He writes from a personal experience of the Dome now rare for non-Muslims: of the strange natural warmth still perceptible in the hole in the Rock; and of the Dome's beauty under candlelight, free from neon.)

The inner drum and dome itself are built over a large exposed rock, which seems never to have been covered by the paving of the esplanade. It was already sacred long before the Dome of the Rock was built over it. Such a centrally planned shrine built over a sacred site is rare in Islam, but is wholly characteristic of Jerusalem. In particular, the rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre was built around the empty tomb of Jesus, and enclosed as well a strangely sacred spur of rock. The Byzantine Church of the Ascension was round with concentric colonnades around Jesus's final footprints on earth; three miles from Jerusalem was the octagonal, colonnaded Church of the Kathisma, honouring the Virgin Mary. Some scholars have understandably wondered if the Dome was built on the foundations of a Christian building.

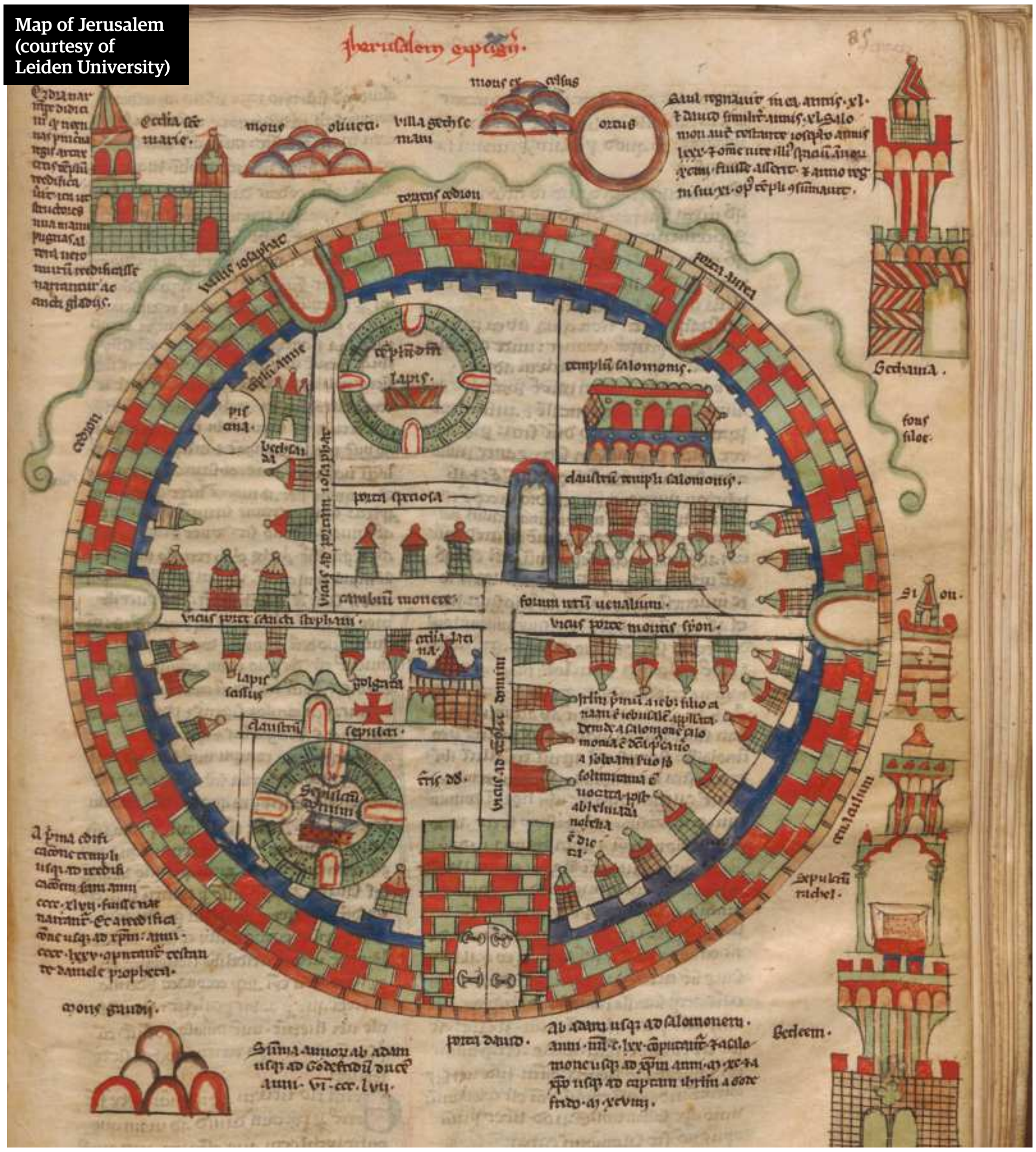
After all this, we may be surprised to find how difficult it is to answer the most basic question posed by the Dome: why was it built? Later Muslim tradition, as we will see, connected it to a central incident in the life of the Prophet Mohammed, but its origins lie far further back in history.

Ever since Constantine's construction of the Holy Sepulchre, less than a mile to the west, the traditions and artefacts of the Jewish Temple had migrated, in the Christian imagination, to the Sepulchre too.

The Muslims captured Jerusalem in 637 CE. We hear from a far later historian, Mujir al-Din (writing c. 1495 CE), how the conquering Caliph Umar asked to visit the Temple of Solomon. The Christian patriarch Sophronius took him reluctantly up to the Temple Mount. The Christians were by now using it as the city's rubbish dump, to ensure that it could never be sanctified for Jewish use again. Umar was horrified to see the filth, "which was then all about the holy sanctuary, had settled on the steps of the gates so that it even came out into the streets in which the gate opened, and it had accumulated so greatly as almost to reach up to the ceiling of the gateway." In a first symbolic restoration, Umar picked up handfuls of rubble and dung, piled them into his cloak, and threw them off the esplanade into the valley below. The Mount was going to be made sacred once more.

Muslim sources continued to emphasise the link with the ancient Temple. "Everyone who visits the Temple," said al-Ramli (d. 1671 CE), "receives the blessing of Solomon's prayer" (spoken at the Temple's consecration, *1 Kings 8, 22-53*), believed to have been uttered while Solomon was actually standing upon the Rock itself. For God said to the Rock of Jerusalem: "You are my earthly throne. From you I ascended to heaven. From beneath you I spread the earth, and every stream that flows from the mountains originates from underneath you" – and in particular

Temple Mount, the oldest Islamic shrine in the world



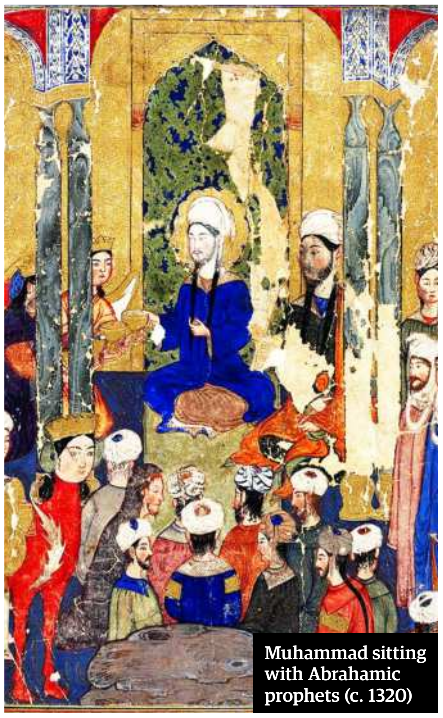
Map of Jerusalem (courtesy of Leiden University)

The Prophet ascends to Heaven

The Mi'raj, Muhammad's Night Journey

Here is one of the earliest portrayals of Muhammad's Night Journey, the Mi'raj. Muhammad is the largest figure, though seated; he is attended by Adam, also seated, and probably by Noah, Abraham and Moses standing on the right. In the left foreground is al-Buraq, the Prophet's winged mount - part-human, part-mule. Angels offer Muhammad a choice of four gold cups of water, milk, wine and honey. In proof of his prophethood, he rightly chooses milk. The lavishly beautiful setting is identified by the rock in the central foreground. Muhammad is shown with long Mongol plaits, in a Buddhst pose, in a perspectival setting worthy of Italian painting. The page was probably created in Tabriz, which was then the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the world.

The first full account of the Mi'raj has reached us from a biography of the Prophet written in the mid-8th century CE. Muhammad was carried miraculously by the angel Gabriel from Mecca to the Temple Mount, and then ascended through the seven heavens to the divine throne. An enigmatic passage in the Quran might - or might not - allude to this journey: "Glory be to him, who carried his servant [Muhammad] by night from the Holy Sanctuary [in Mecca] to the Further Sanctuary, the precincts of which we have blessed, that we might show him some of our signs" (*Sura 17.1*). A cavity in the Rock is said to be the imprint either of the Prophet's foot or of al-Buraq's hoof. Aisha, by contrast, the Prophet's favourite wife, understood the Mi'raj to have been a journey in the spirit alone.



Muhammad sitting with Abrahamic prophets (c. 1320)

The Templars' temperance

The Templars were fierce and disciplined fighters, and also wiser than some of the other crusaders. The poet Usama ibn Munqidh (d. 1188 CE) recalled the following

"When I visited Jerusalem I always entered the Aqsa Mosque, beside which stood a small mosque which the Franks had converted into a church. When I used to enter the Aqsa Mosque, which was occupied by the Templars, who were my friends, the Templars would evacuate the little adjoining mosque so that I might pray in it. One day I entered the mosque, repeated the first formula, 'Allah is great,' and stood up in the act of praying, upon which one of the Franks rushed on me, got hold of me and turned my face eastward saying, 'This is the way you should pray!' A group of Templars hastened to him, seized him and repelled him from me. I resumed my prayer. The same man, while the others were otherwise busy, rushed once more on me and turned my face eastward, saying, 'This is the way you should pray!' The Templars again came in and expelled him. They apologized to me, saying, 'This is a stranger who has only recently arrived from the land of the Franks and he has never before seen anyone praying except eastward.' Thereupon I said to myself, 'I have had enough prayer.' So I went out and have ever since been surprised at the conduct of this devil of a man, at the change in the colour of his face, his trembling and his feelings at the sight of one praying towards Mecca."

Al-Aqsa Mosque, in the Old City of Jerusalem

the rivers of Paradise (*Gen. 2.11-4*). Here was the navel of the universe, the first place to be created. Here too was the place at which Abraham so nearly sacrificed his son Isaac (*Genesis 22.1-19*), and here will be the place of God's throne on the Day of Judgement. The Persian Nasir-i Khusrau (d. 1088 CE) records that Abraham walked on the Rock and that the footprints of Isaac as a small child, all the way down to the imprint of his toes, can be seen there in seven different places, impressed onto the Rock as if it were made of soft clay. All these links are found in Jewish mythology too, connected with the Foundation Stone, eben ha shetiya, on the Temple Mount.

Jerusalem was in Muslim hands for nearly 60 years before the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock. A famous account from the 10th century CE identifies the Caliph's agenda. "Is it not evident that 'Abd al-Malik, seeing the greatness of the Holy Sepulchre and its magnificence, was moved lest it should dazzle the minds of Muslims, and so he erected above the Rock the Dome which is now seen there," (Al-Maqdisi, 984 CE, here reporting words of his uncle). The span of the inner colonnade of the Holy Sepulchre is 29.90 metres; of the Dome, 20.37 metres - so close that a convergence can hardly have come about by chance.

The crusaders took Jerusalem on 15 July 1099. Christian chroniclers proudly saw this victory as the fulfilment of an unforgettable prophecy: the angel of the Lord ran the earth's harvest through the wine-press of the God's wrath and outside the city "blood flowed from the wine-press, as high as a horse's bridle, for about 200 miles," (*Revelation 14.20*). The slaughter was most violent on the Temple Mount. "If I tell you what happened there," wrote Raymond of Aguilers, "it will be beyond belief. Suffice it to say, in the Temple and around the Portico of Solomon the crusaders were riding in blood to their knees and up to the reins of their horses." It is at least possible that the crusaders themselves were inspired by *Revelation* to wreak a terrible vengeance on the city's inhabitants.

Following this, the Christian revival of the Temple Mount was instant. On the day of the capture, the crusaders proceeded to the Sepulchre and from there to the Temple of the Lord. There were similar processions on 10 August when armies had left to confront the Egyptians at Ascalon; on Easter Day 1101, when the Easter Fire failed to appear; and on 7 July 1124, when news of the victory at Tyre reached Jerusalem. An annual procession that included the Dome on 15 July celebrated the city's capture in 1099 and the rededication of the Holy Sepulchre in 1149.

The discovery of sacred sites became competitive. The Dome of the Rock was converted into a church, surmounted by a huge, golden cross. The Temple and its altar were dedicated to the Virgin. On the Mount, a pilgrim would now be shown the School of the Virgin and the Church of the Bath where the Virgin spent the night before the Purification. Here is an account by Saewulf in Jerusalem between 1101 and 1103:

"In this place, by divine command, Solomon made the Temple of the Lord. He built it with magnificent workmanship without any equal, and decorated it with all the ornament about which one reads in the Book of Kings. In its glory it excelled all other houses and buildings. In the middle of this Temple is to be seen a rock which is high and large and hollow underneath, in which was the Holy of Holies. There Solomon put the Ark of the Covenant, with the manna and the rod of Aaron... and the two tables of the Covenant. ....There the child Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day, and was named 'Jesus'. There the Lord Jesus was offered by his parents with the Virgin Mother Mary on the day of her Purification, and received by Simeon."

Christian pilgrims had already, before the crusades, wondered how old the Dome was: perhaps the Dome had been built by Solomon, perhaps by a Byzantine emperor. When Pope Urban II declared the First Crusade at Clermont in 1195, he could evoke the Temple of the Lord, defiled by the idols erected there - as he implausibly claimed - by the Muslims. On one point there was no doubt: Solomon's Holy of Holies had been built over the Rock itself, where the altar was now to stand. Statues and images of Solomon, of Jesus and of the Virgin and Child were introduced, and of the Messiah in gold encrusted with precious stones. A beautiful metal grille was installed round the Rock, to prevent pilgrims from breaking off fragments to take home; but there was nonetheless a flourishing trade in these slivers of stone, which were sold for their weight in gold. Over the footprint of the Prophet Muhammad the crusaders erected 'a small gilded dome with raised marble pillars and they said it was the place of the Messiah's foot'. The Dome was appropriately managed by the Canons of the Temple of the Lord, who gave the Templars a neighbouring square in which to say their offices.

The Aqsa Mosque to the south was described as either the Temple or the Palace of Solomon. The king of Jerusalem had his palace at first in and around the Mosque, where he gave some space to the Templars. When in the 1120s the king moved to the Tower of David at the western end of the city, he consigned his whole palace on the Temple Mount to the Order. The Templars were not, initially, rich at all; their clothes were cast-offs from pilgrims, the Aqsa Mosque was sadly dilapidated. How things had changed, by the end of the century. Not everyone was pleased. The German pilgrim Dietrich, keen in all things to praise the German crusaders and belittle the French, admired the Hospitallers and their care for 2,000 people a day. He had nothing good to say about the (primarily French) Templars who for all their wealth did, he says, less than a tenth for the poor and were suspected of perjury.

The fullest account of the Templars' final buildings has reached us from a second German monk, Theoderic. To the west of the Mosque, the Order created a classic monastic compound, with hall and church (which was never completed) on two sides of a cloister. Theoderic was hugely impressed.

Some 300 Templars were based in Jerusalem overall, supported by 1,000 sergeants. Each knight was entitled to three horses, each sergeant to one. The vast vaults supporting Herod's expansion of the esplanade were believed by the crusaders to have been King Solomon's stables; they became the Templars' stables. Theoderic thought 10,000 horses were stabled there; a slightly earlier pilgrim had claimed 2,000, and modern estimates believe 500, with accommodation for grooms and squires. If that was the Templars' only stabling in the city, they may have been housing on the Temple Mount few more than 75 knights and their attendants. In the disasters of 1187, 60 Templars were killed at the Springs of Cresson, and 230 were executed by Saladin after the Battle of Hattin. Almost the whole Order in the Kingdom had been wiped out.

But the Order survived, and amid all its military obligations, so did its lines of international credit. In the 1250s-60s the crusaders needed money. King Louis IX of France raised funds from merchants in the Middle East, and the Templars guaranteed that the debts could be redeemed at the Temple treasury in Paris.

The Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem could not last. Within weeks of the disaster at Hattin, Saladin recaptured the city. The Haram al-Sharif must be purified, instantly. "There was," Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) tells us, "on top of the Dome of the Rock a large golden cross. When the Muslims entered the city on the Friday a group of them scaled up to the top of the dome to remove the cross. When they reached the top all the people cried with one voice." Saladin replaced the cross with a crescent.

When the Dome of the Rock was completed, more than 100,000 gold dinars of its budget remained. The Caliph offered it to the men who had supervised the project, but they refused and so, we are told, he wrote to them: "Melt [the remaining coins] and pour [the metal] on the Dome of the Rock and the gate."

The present appearance of the Dome, once more sheathed in dazzling gold, dates from 1993. We can at last see for ourselves what al-Muqaddasi, an architect native of Jerusalem, described with awe: "as soon as the beams of the sun strike the cupola, and the drum radiates the light, then indeed is this marvellous to behold; in short, I have never seen in all Islam the like of it."

The Night Journey and Mystical Jerusalem

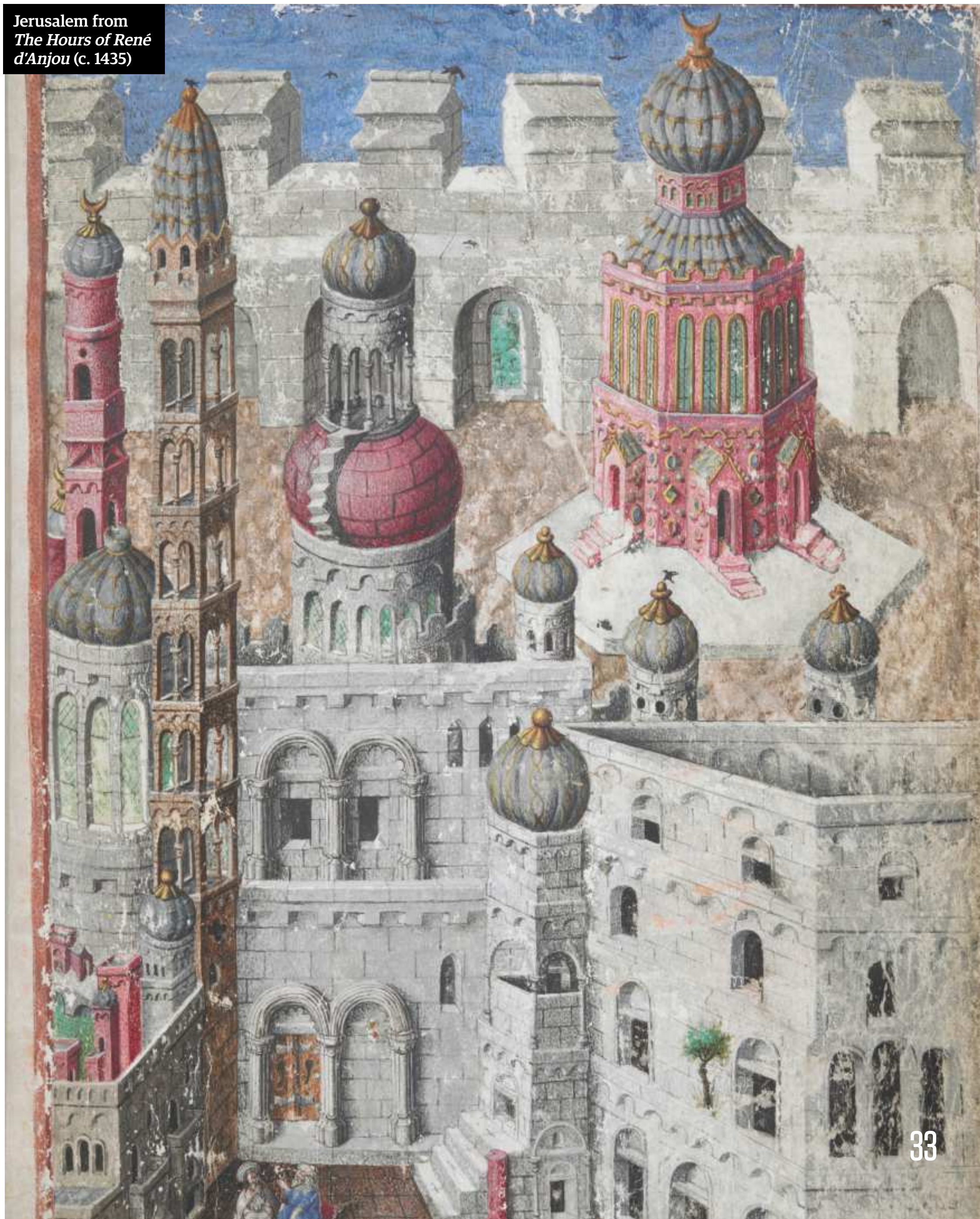
Muhammad's Night Journey may seem to epitomise the gulf between Judaism and Christianity on the one hand, and Islam on the other. Simply, it is too strangely mystical for many of us, in the secular West, to understand. But we should look again.

In Judaism, the Temple's Holy of Holies was the intersection of Heaven and Earth. It was, as much as any place on earth could be, the home of God. It had once housed the Ark of the Covenant, the footstool of God's throne, adorned with two small cherubim; and two giant cherubim that formed the throne. Dividing the Holy of Holies, a windowless cube, from the sunlight outside was a vast veil, embroidered with sun and moon and stars on a dark-blue background. Only the High Priest ever passed through into the Holy of Holies, and only on the Day of Atonement; and in doing so he passed 'through' the heavens of the veil into the court of God himself.

By the time of Jesus and Paul, Jewish mystics were training for years to catch a glimpse of 'the likeness as the appearance of Adam' who sat on the throne of God (Ezekiel 1). The journey to God's throne room was envisioned as a journey through the successive courts and up the successive stairs of the Temple towards and finally into the Holy of Holies.

St. Paul was such a mystic. What he saw on the Road to Damascus was probably a vision of 'the likeness as the appearance of Adam' on God's throne, whom he recognised as Jesus. Jesus himself had, at the Transfiguration, initiated his closest disciples in the ways of mystical vision; and Jesus finally ascended to Heaven from a mountain just outside Jerusalem. The Book of Revelation and the Letter to the Hebrews are steeped in mystical lore and practices.

The Night Journey stands in a long tradition. Muslim mystics would be especially drawn to the Dome of the Rock. For Sufyan al-Thauri (d. 778), the greatest pleasure in life consisted of eating bananas (a rare treat at that time) in the shadow of this building.



Jerusalem from *The Hours of René d'Anjou* (c. 1435)

A day in the life of

A Templar Knight

Where monastic scheduling meets knightly duty and commercial flair

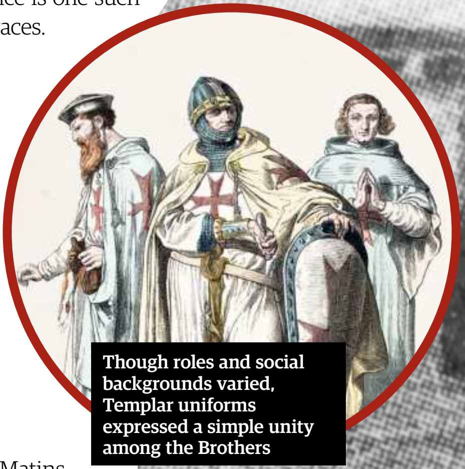
Where: The Preceptory at Montsaunès, France
When: Sunday, summer 1232

Written by Hareth Al Bustani

To join the order was to sign up to a life of communal living and abstinence. While some degree of leeway was reserved for knights living overseas on the front lines of Christendom, those in Europe were expected to hold the fort with piety and discipline. It was their duty to maintain a presence back home, aiding the needy and managing the order's various businesses. Their lives were in many ways monastic - scheduled around the seven main prayers, restricted from the joys of the flesh. Living in a commandery in southwestern France is one such Templar; a knight of the finest stock, without airs and graces.

Waking up

The knight wakes to the sound of a ringing bell. He quietly dresses in one of his two sets of clothing: a linen shirt with a small belt, breeches, hose, a jerkin, a short-sleeved white tunic with a red cross on the left breast and a leather belt. As a knight of the Order of the Temple, he is prohibited from wearing pointed shoes, lace or overly long hair. His beard, if he has one, must be kept neat.



Though roles and social backgrounds varied, Templar uniforms expressed a simple unity among the Brothers

Matins

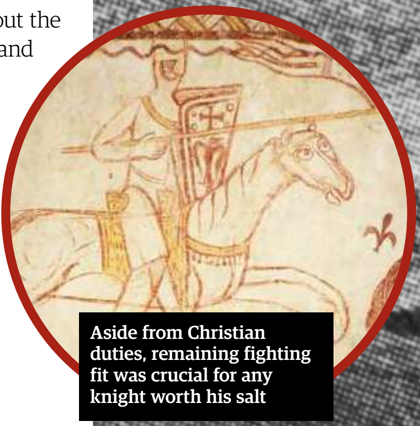
Having made his bed, he heads to the chapel for the Matins prayer - the first of seven daily prayers, modelled after the Monastic Day according to the rule of St Benedict. Some of his peers are away on the order's business and will instead recite the Lord's Prayer 13 times. Afterwards, he checks his horses and equipment, speaks to the squires and goes back to bed, reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Mass

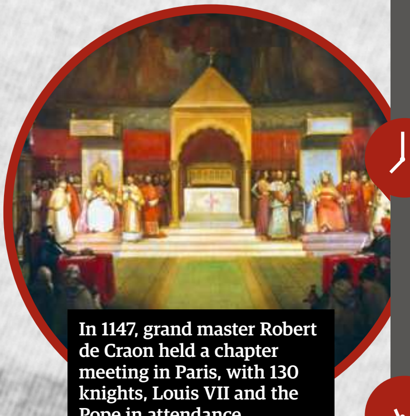
During Prime Prayer, the knight listens to psalms and lessons from the Bible and, if he wishes, can sing along to some hymns. The order is careful to differentiate between modesty and austerity, and does not require Brothers to stand throughout the service - instead they alternate between standing, sitting and kneeling at different points of the Mass.

Morning duties

Having received his orders for the day, the knight is not allowed to do anything else, unless given express permission. As a Brother without a senior post, much of his time is spent training, riding one of his three horses and sparring with his fellow knights. One day, after all, he may be called up to fight in the East.



Aside from Christian duties, remaining fighting fit was crucial for any knight worth his salt



In 1147, grand master Robert de Craon held a chapter meeting in Paris, with 130 knights, Louis VII and the Pope in attendance

Chapter Meeting

Following Terce prayers, the knight attends the weekly Chapter Meeting, where penances and punishments are dished out. One member is disciplined for cavorting with a local village woman, and has his habit removed for a month. When he returns, he may have to subsist on bread and water every few days for a whole year, and eat on the floor.

Lunch

After Sext prayers, the knight spends some time repairing armour and equipment, and checking the house and grounds are in good order. This preludes lunch where, given it is meat day, the Brothers are offered a choice of lamb or beef. Unable to stomach tough meat, he sits with the mutton eaters. He is paired with another knight; and even though each Brother receives an equal amount, the two make sure each has enough to eat. They sit in silence, as prayers are read from the Bible.

Sergeants and other household staff at the Montsaunès preceptory produced copious amounts of food and wine

Afternoon duties

During Nones prayers, the Brothers hold vespers and vigils for the dead. Once this is complete, the almoner collects one tenth of all bread to give to the poor, and leftover scraps for the servants. The knight oversees the sergeants, busy cleaning out the pigsties, feeding the livestock, making wine and tending to the garden. Just like the monks who inspired them, the Templars produce much of their own food and drink.

Vespers and dinner

After the sunset Vespers prayers, it is dinner time. The knight once again eats mutton, careful when cutting up his food, as he knows his leftovers will be given to the poor, and should be kept in a presentable state. Enough food is prepared to feed one poor person for each of the 15 Brothers. Tomorrow will be a fast day, meaning no meat, but that is no cause to overindulge today.

Evening relaxation

With belly full, the knight gives thanks with a private prayer in the chapel. A little later, he snacks on cheese and bread, accompanied with a modest serving of warm red wine. Everyone is given the same amount: alcoholic beverages are much safer to drink than water during the Middle Ages! Though the knight sometimes misses the ease of a tavern, he is always careful not to drink too liberally, for those who do are given the ultimatum: give up the drink or leave the order.

Winding down

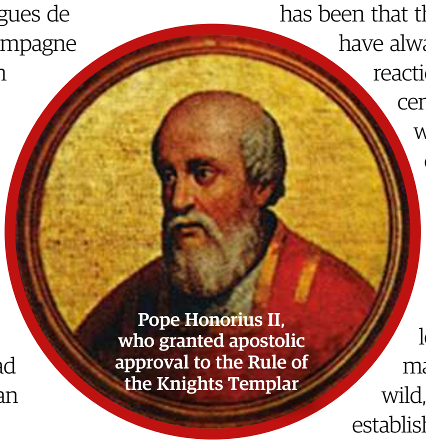
After the last prayer of the day, Compline, it is time to head to bed. Those few Brothers who joined the order as married men return to their own dormitory, while the majority of the Brotherhood bunk together. Though silence is expected, some Brothers briefly discuss important matters. As the candles flicker, the knight asks the squires about the day's produce, undresses to his shirt and breeches, recites the Lord's Prayer 13 times, and goes to sleep.

Bernard's rules

As a new type of knight, the Templars needed someone to reimagine their role, and they found the man to do that in Bernard of Clairvaux

Written by Edoardo Albert

Amid the obscurity of the early years of the Knights Templar, one thing is clear: personal connections counted. They counted a lot. First, there were the two Hugues. Hugues de Payens, the first master of the Order, was originally oath bound to his lord, the second Hugues, the count of Champagne, in whose land the village of Payens (now Payns) is located. The two Hugues went together to Palestine in 1114. Hugues de Payens stayed, the count of Champagne returned home, only to return in 1125 to become a Templar. But just as important to the success of the Templars was another man who formed the apex of this complicated triangle of personal relationships. His name was Bernard, and he was the abbot of the new monastery at Clairvaux.

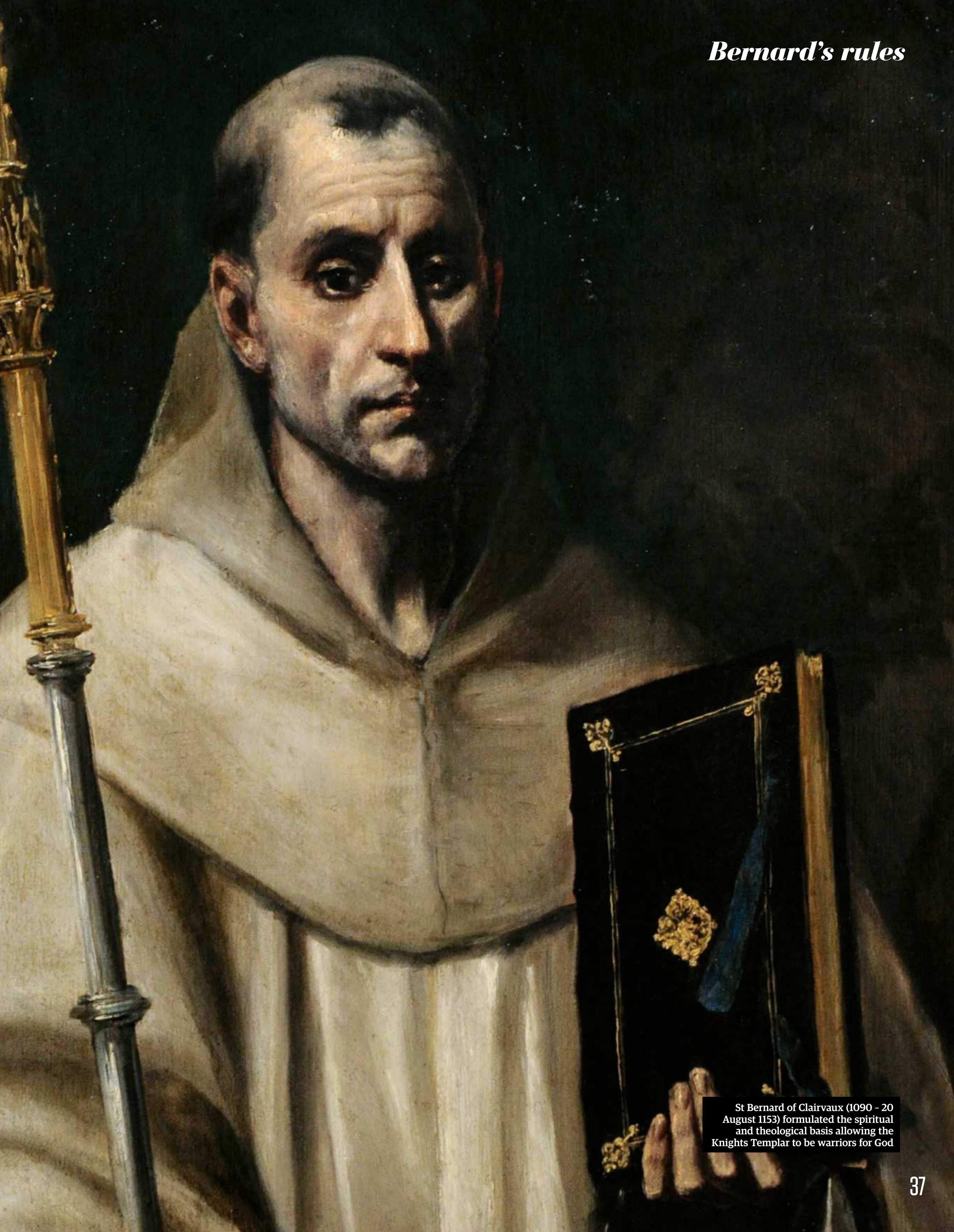

Pope Honorius II, who granted apostolic approval to the Rule of the Knights Templar

For centuries, monasticism had been the great engine of Christian growth. It was the monasteries that had lit beacons of scholarship and civilisation following the end of the western Roman Empire. It was the monks of Ireland and Britain who had embarked on the conversion of the northern pagans in the 7th and 8th centuries, and who had provided the learning that had fuelled the Carolingian renaissance of the 9th century. But by the 12th century, Europe's monastic culture had been hollowed out by its own success. Kings and magnates, grateful for the scholarship and gravitas supplied by monastic counsellors, gave over vast estates to the monasteries, thus pulling the abbots into all manner of everyday secular affairs and ensuring that the monks slowly stopped the hard manual labour that had been part of their original calling to become, in effect, estate managers who also took the vocal parts in more and more elaborate liturgies.

One of the historic characteristics of Christianity has been that these gradual slips into laxity have always produced a vigorous reaction. This was true in the 12th century too. Appalled at monks who either served as royal officials or left servants to do the work while they sang in monastic choirs well fed by their monastic estates, a young man named Bernard, who came from Fontaines-lès-Dijons, appealed to a local magnate to be given a tract of wild, forested land where he could establish a monastery that returned to the old monastic ideals of prayer and physical labour. But Fontaines-lès-Dijons lay 80 miles south west of Troyes, the seat of Hugues, the count of Champagne. It was to the count of Champagne that Bernard, then 25, made the request for land, a request that the always-pious count was happy to grant.

The land that the count of Champagne gifted to Bernard and his 12 companions had a notorious reputation as the refuge of brigands and murderers,

Bernard's rules



St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 - 20 August 1153) formulated the spiritual and theological basis allowing the Knights Templar to be warriors for God so much so that it was known as the Valley of Wormwood. Bernard renamed it the Valley of Light and set about banishing the darkness, through manual labour, prayer and great physical austerity.

The contemporary world has little understanding of or sympathy for medieval asceticism, but remember that this was a culture that valued heroism and bravery above all other virtues. The bravery of a knight was matched by the heroic austerities practised by Bernard and his monks. For it's also worth remembering that the majority of postulants to Bernard's community came from the same social class that produced knights. Indeed, as the scion of the nobility, the only practical choice for a boy lay with either a martial or a religious life, wielding a sword or raising his voice in prayer. Even those young men who, through natural inclination and an aversion to bloodshed, chose the religious life were formed by the culture that venerated the military exploits of their brothers. Such were the austerities that Bernard visited upon himself that he fell seriously ill, but it was precisely this reckless abandon in the spiritual realm that drew followers to the new monastery, in the same way that reckless bravery on the battlefield drew admiration and praise from poets and troubadours.

But faced with a wilderness, Bernard and his brothers did what previous generations of monks had done: they set about taming and ordering it. In this, they imposed on a landscape the same disciplines they placed upon their own souls, where the regularity of monastic life and its insistence upon prayer, obedience and chastity sought to order and tame the unruly and disordered passions of the human heart. The Valley of Wormwood was marshy, watered by the River Aube that flowed through it, with steep, thickly wooded hills rising on either bank. The monks set about clearing the woods and planting the land, for Bernard was determined that his monastery would be self-sufficient, seeking out neither food nor donations from the local nobility. To that end, the monks had to cultivate and grow their own food. So one hill was given over to crops, the other planted with a vineyard.

The seal of Fulk, Count of Anjou, who became king of Jerusalem in 1131

Bernard had first entered the monastic life at Cîteaux Abbey, which had been founded on 21 March 1098 as part of the reaction against the growing laxity of the Benedictines. To mark themselves out from the Benedictines, the monks of this new order, who came to be called Cistercians after their mother house at Cîteaux, changed the colour of their habits from Benedictine black to pristine, snowy white. They were starting afresh on a new page of monastic history. But it was Bernard who was most responsible for the extraordinary growth of the Cistercians in the 12th century. He must have been a man of great personal charm and charisma. His example caused his father and all his brothers to enter the monastery at Clairvaux, while his sister, Humbeline, who had already married, received her husband's consent to enter a convent.

Apart from his personal magnetism, Bernard was also a gifted and inveterate letter writer, maintaining a stream of correspondence with all manner of people, from the most exalted to the humblest. Never lacking in confidence, Bernard wrote to Pope Innocent II, first apologising for bothering him and then telling him what his duties were with respect to a group of poor Cistercians.

Clairvaux Abbey was dissolved during the French Revolution. Napoleon made use of the buildings by turning them into a prison, which is what they remain

But if he wrote to popes, Bernard wrote with equal passion and at even greater length to ordinary people who sought his spiritual advice.

While the stream of letters and, later, visitors to Clairvaux drew Bernard inevitably into secular affairs, he always strove to balance this against his monastic calling, seeking withdrawal from the world both within his monastery and in the woods and hills around it. Indeed, so profound was his love for nature that he could say, "Believe me, for I know, you will find something far greater in the woods than in books. Stones and trees will teach you that which you cannot learn from the masters."

But although Bernard tried to withdraw from the world, it insisted on calling on him and, in 1126, it did so by means of a letter from Baldwin II, king of Jerusalem. Baldwin II was asking for help. He needed to find a husband for his eldest daughter, Melisende. But not only was he looking for a suitable husband, he was also seeking a future king, for Melisende's dowry was the Kingdom of Jerusalem. For Baldwin's queen had given birth to three daughters and no sons. While the laws of Outremer allowed a wife or daughter to inherit the property and title from a husband or father upon his death, the realities on the ground necessitated that a widow or daughter should remain unmarried for as short a time as possible after the death of a spouse or father, for the simple reason that it required a man to lead the knights of Outremer into battle that they might keep their lands. With only three daughters, Baldwin decided to find a suitable husband for Melisende while he was still alive, ensuring the succession upon his death. The man he wanted was Fulk, Count of Anjou, and, having written to Bernard to secure his support for the match, Baldwin sent a mission to Europe to negotiate the deal. This mission was led by Hugues de Payens, the master of the Knights Templar.

Hugues secured Fulk's agreement to the match in April 1128, then set out on a north European itinerary, travelling through France, England and Scotland, recruiting men for the Templars and fundraising for their work. The trip seems to have been a huge success, with the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reporting that Hugues recruited more men in England than had joined the First Crusade. Anjou, Fulk's patrimony, lies a long way from Clairvaux, but Hugues would have known the buzz of news about the rigorous new monastery and its charismatic abbot from one of his own Templars, a man who had been among the original group of men to form the order, André of Montbard. For, as further evidence of the interconnectedness of this small group of men, André was uncle to Bernard of Clairvaux, the half-brother to Bernard's mother.

A thousand years after their foundation, the monks of Citeaux Abbey continue to live the austere life enjoined on them by their founder

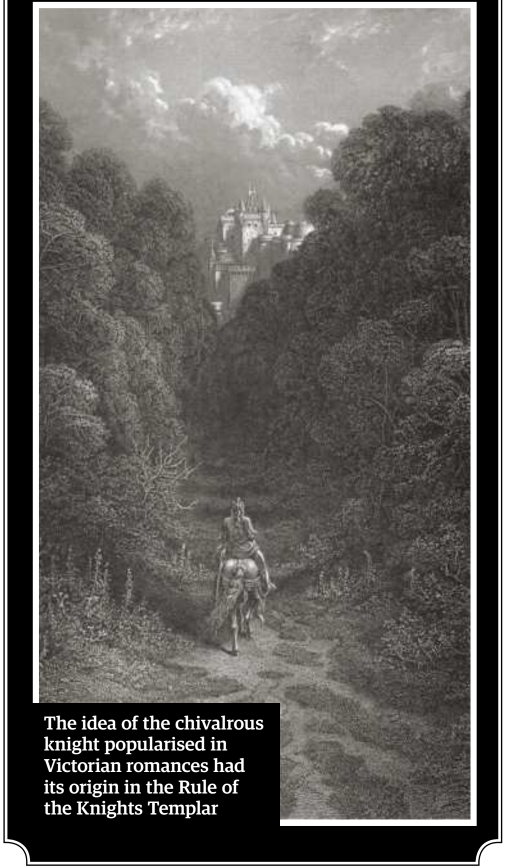
The rule

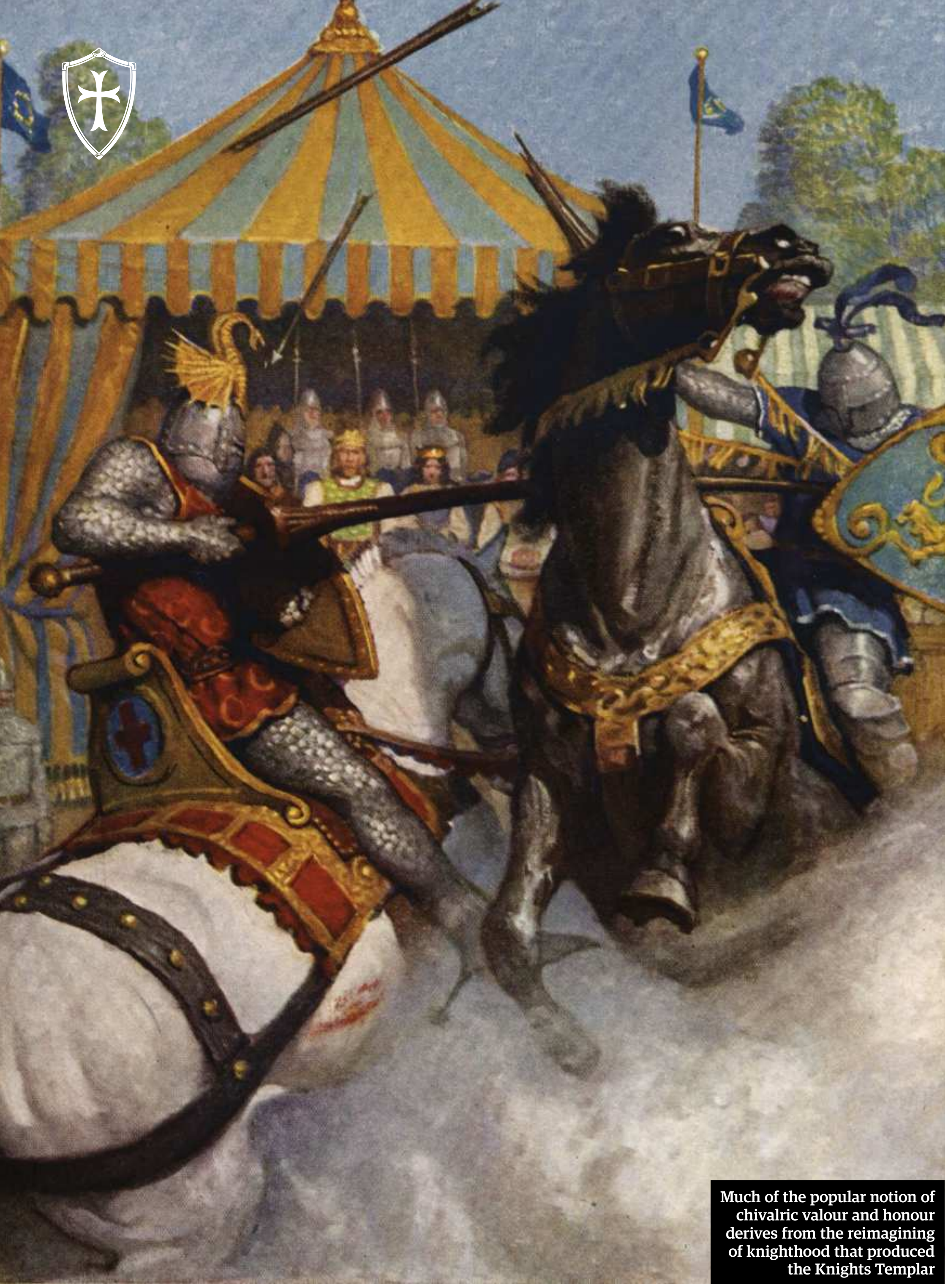
How Templars balanced prayer and war

Monastic rules regimented the lives of monks in a constant round of regular prayer and work. But the lives of soldiers on campaign were anything but regular. To reconcile the two, the rule permitted these soldier monks to say the Pater Noster (Our Father) in place of the regular monastic services if these had to be missed as a result of being in the field. Thus, if the Knight did not attend matins, he had to say 13 Our Fathers, nine if he missed vespers, and seven for the other monastic offices.

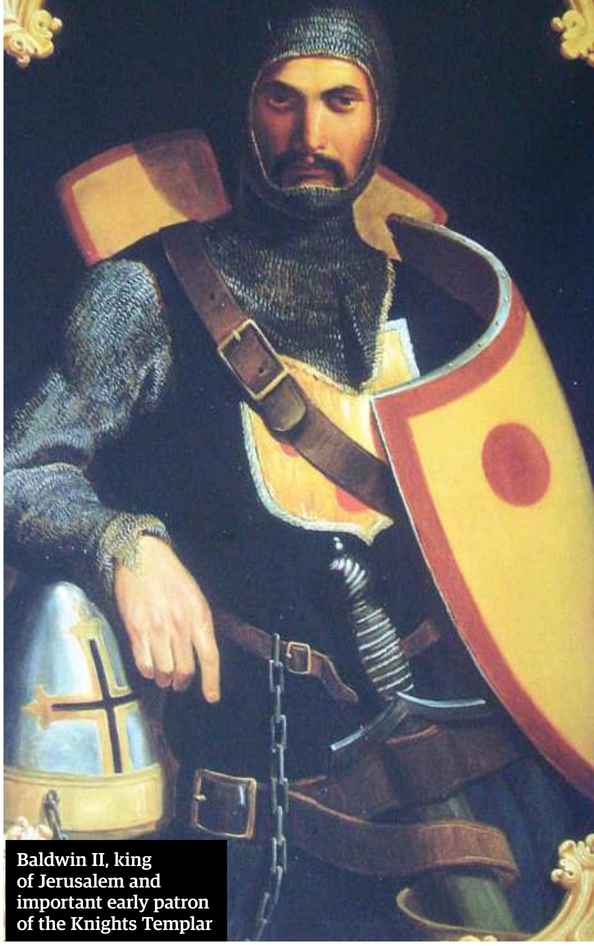
This allowed for men to enlist in the Order who only had sufficient Latin to say the Pater Noster, opening the Templars to a wider pool of pious but less-educated fighting men. The rule also made provision for fully professed knights who swore to a lifetime of service in the Order, and others who signed up to serve for a fixed period of years. Humility and lack of display was enjoined on these new warriors.

The secular knights of the time could be described as psychopathic peacocks, men capable of extreme violence flaunting the richest and most elaborate clothing and display they could afford. Fur, jewellery or rich clothing was forbidden to the Templars, as was the decoration of their horse's harness with gold and silver. The Templars were to wear simple white, their horses to be harnessed in plain leather. As for their appearance, they were to have their hair and beards trimmed regularly. The Order was to be ordered outside as well as within.


The idea of the chivalrous knight popularised in Victorian romances had its origin in the Rule of the Knights Templar



Much of the popular notion of chivalric valour and honour derives from the reimagining of knighthood that produced the Knights Templar



Baldwin II, king of Jerusalem and important early patron of the Knights Templar

(By a peculiarity of remarriage, although André was Bernard's uncle he was actually seven years younger than Bernard.)

It was André whom Hugues chose to carry a letter to Bernard. While Hugues' trip to Europe had gone very well, there were still two things that the Templars required before they could know themselves secure in their calling as military monks: they needed a rule and apostolic confirmation, that is the approval of the pope. To that end, a great council of the church was called in Troyes, the seat of the counts of Champagne, convening first on Sunday 13 January 1129. Despite being ill, Bernard heeded the summons to the council, and the entreaties conveyed him in the letter that was delivered by his young uncle, André, and attended the council.

It was not a foregone conclusion that the Templars would receive papal approval. For many churchmen, it remained clear that a monastic vocation was a higher calling than crusading, while others believed that Christ's admonition that 'all who take the sword will perish by the sword' belied the possibility of lawful violence. As for a 'rule', this was something more than just a set of regulations. In medieval thought, an ordo was the means and method by which a body of men became part of the Christian polity; it made of them a legal, social and religious institute.

The council that had convened to consider this matter consisted of 21 churchmen, Bernard among them, and two counts, of Champagne and Nevers. Matthew, bishop of Albano, presided as papal legate, representing Pope Honorius II. Hugues de Payens, with five other Templars, appeared before the council to plead their case.

In the deliberations of the council, two voices were loudest, those of Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugues de Payens. According to the official scribe for the council, a cleric named Jean Michel, the council proceeded by listening to Hugues' testimony as to the duties and requirements of the Templars, and their current arrangements in satisfying these, before debating, questioning and agreeing what the rule for the order should be going forward. In the debates on the nature of this new order and its permissibility, Bernard's conception of a reformed and Christian order of knighthood became first clarified and then accepted. Everybody present would have known the reality of men of violence; it was the constant backdrop of society, as prevalent among the nobility as among the peasants, but the nobility, being better armed and better trained, were the more lethal. The ideal of the knight in shining armour, the champion of the weak, the widow and the orphan, was the newborn ideal that informs the rule that Bernard and the assembled prelates wrote for the Templars. "In this religious order has flourished and is revitalised the order of knighthood for our salvation and the spread of the true faith." These were the ideals that, when combined with the courtly cult of love associated with the court at Provençal, created the perfect knight of medieval legend. Lancelot was the highest ideal of knighthood to come from the courtly cult of love but with the adumbration of a truly Christian knighthood, a greater knight than Lancelot became conceivable: Galahad, Lancelot's son and the perfect knight, alone capable of achieving the quest for the Holy Grail.

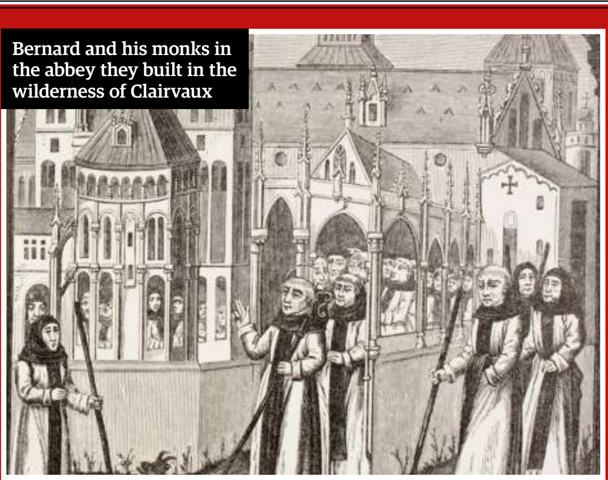
Pope Honorius gave his apostolic approval. The Templars were now an ordo. But under the rule conceived by Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugues de Payens, the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ and the Temple of Solomon were enjoined to achieve something never before attempted. They were not just warriors and not just holy men. They were to be perfect knights.

Pope Benedict XVI greeting present-day Cistercian monks, who still wear the distinctive white habit of their order

In praise of the new knighthood

War reimagined as a sacred duty

Having returned to Outremer with the rule for his order, Hugues de Payens' thoughts still turned to the abbot he had met at the council in Troyes. He sent a letter to Bernard, asking him to write some words of counsel for the men setting out on this new path. After the third letter, Bernard set about his reply, *De laude novae militiae*. It further expresses Bernard's thoughts on the new knighthood, and how it should wage war on two fronts, against both flesh-and-blood enemies, and spiritual enemies. The language of struggle and fighting had frequently been employed by previous writers to describe the spiritual path. Now Bernard employed the same language to encompass both a military and a spiritual calling. For Bernard, there was a distinction between homicide - the killing of a man, which remained a sin - and malicide, the destruction of evil, which was the spiritual and military duty of the Templars. They were to be active agents against earthly evil, conceived as the pagans who would again wrest away the Holy Places. Was it possible for a man to kill in the service of that which was good? Bernard was saying that it was possible. No, more than possible. For the Templars, it was their path to heaven.



Bernard and his monks in the abbey they built in the wilderness of Clairvaux

Early papal bulls

From ragtag knights kicking the dust of Jerusalem, to an all-round powerhouse outfit, none of it was achievable without the Vatican's support

Written by Martyn Conterio

The stellar rise of the Templars was aided by the incredibly generous and successive support of mid-12th century popes. Three papal bulls issued by a trio of popes enabled the order to thrive in medieval Europe and what was then called Outremer (the name for collective Crusader states, from the French for 'overseas'). This official backing was extraordinarily advantageous, as it laid foundations for the Templars to dominate for the next century and become what today would be equivalent to an international multi-corporation.

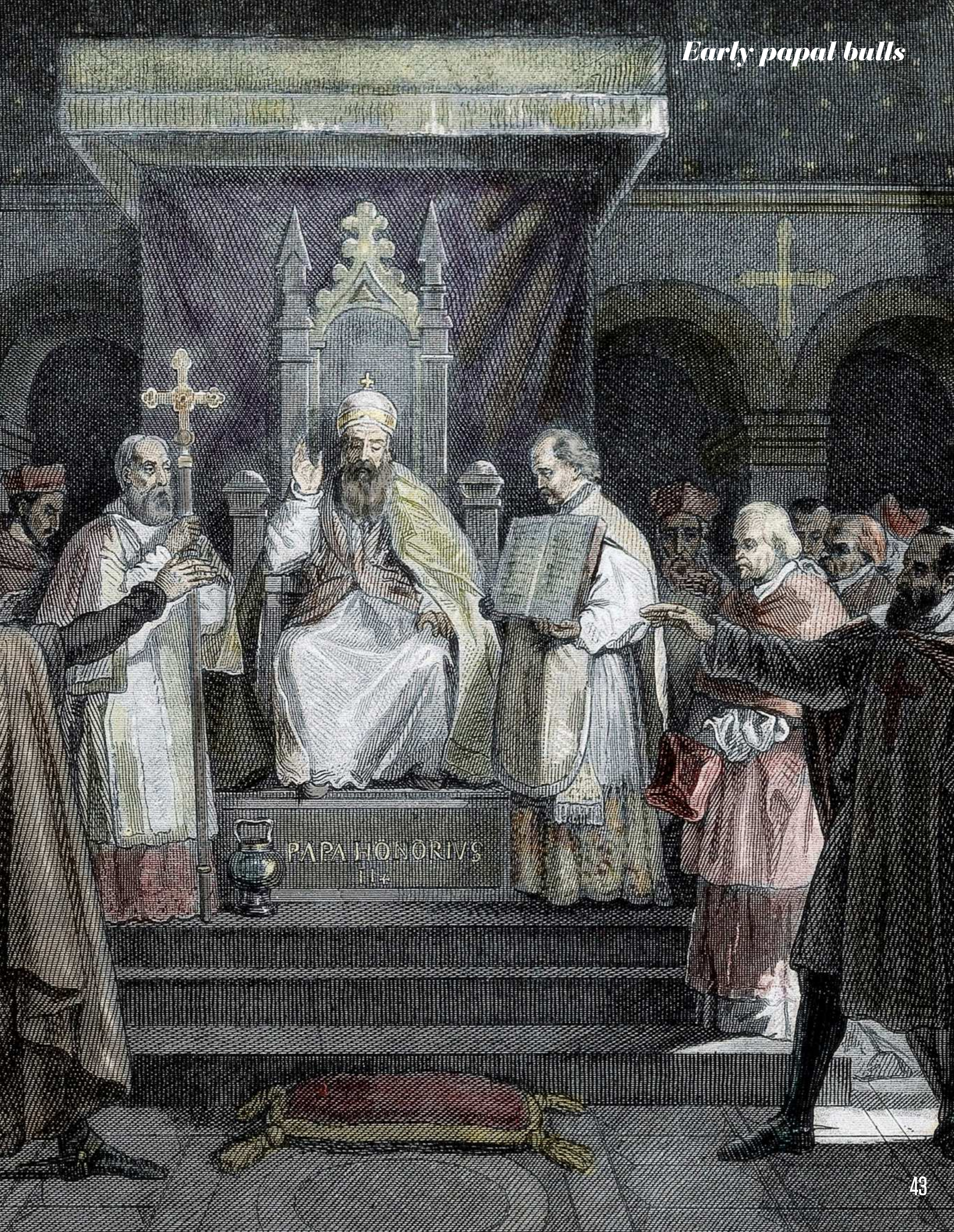
The holy order was founded in 1119 in Jerusalem, the very heart of Christendom. A set of decrees (issued in 1139, 1144 and 1145), known as papal bulls, named so after the lead seal (in Latin a 'bulla') used by Holy Sees to authenticate missives, cemented and reaffirmed (when necessary) the pope's gifts and commitments, as well as presenting the positive, pious reputation of the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ. The organisation captured the imaginations of royalty and peasants alike.

A papal bull sets out the pope's name, his title 'episcopus servus servorum Dei' (bishop, servant of the servants of God) and an initial incipit by which the bull will become known. Having the papacy on side was a major coup for the Templars, especially when other warrior-monk outfits (including the Hospitallers) struggled for full endorsement (they wouldn't have their Rule confirmed until 1153). The pope giving his blessing to the Templars lent them popularity, prestige and widespread credence. The greatest benefits, however, would be the power of autonomy and protection of the clergy. Nobody - at least not for almost 200 years - could mess with the Templars. The commands of the pope were the commands of God. Anybody who sought to harass the Templars or cause the order trouble would be threatened with excommunication, may be forbidden from taking part in religious services and have their immortal soul threatened with eternal damnation. It was the type of existential threat people in the Middle Ages would have taken extremely seriously. As foretold by the Church, those who lacked faith, on the Day of Judgement, would end up south of heaven and forced to endure all manner of grisly torments for all eternity.

The first papal bull, 1139's *Omne datum optimum* (Every good gift), issued by Pope Innocent II on 29 March that year, referenced the Epistle of James: "Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that can be cast by turning."

The bull, addressed to the order's second grand master, Robert of Craon, figurehead of the Templars from 1136-1147, after the death of founder and first grand master, Hugues de Paynes, placed them under the direct and sole protection of the pope. It meant they were answerable to nobody but the Holy See. It was a bold and unusual move, certainly, meaning the Templars did not have to bow to the authority of kings or local church authorities. The bull approved the Templar Rule; they would be led by a master of their own choosing and could wear the red cross on the white mantle (a uniform

Pope Honorius II granted official recognition to the Knights Templar organisation in 1129. This paved the way for their further development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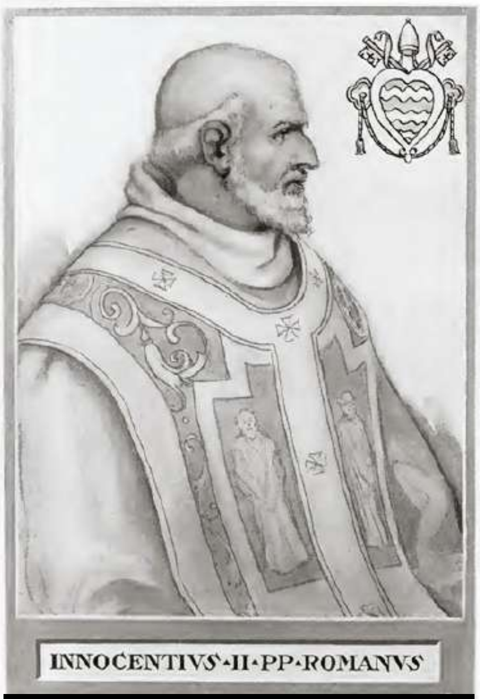
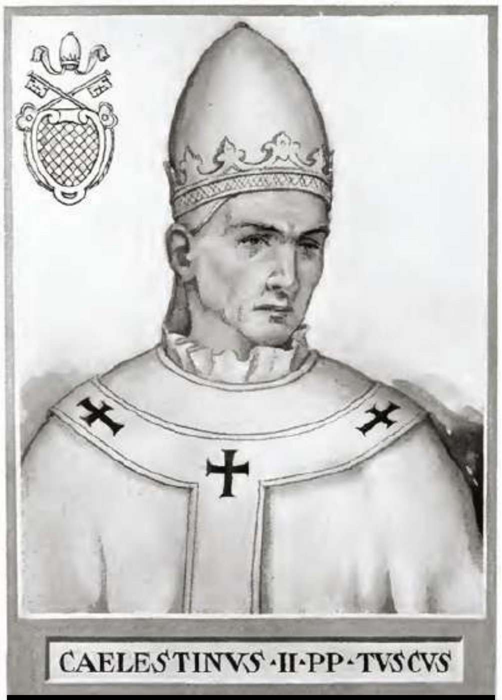
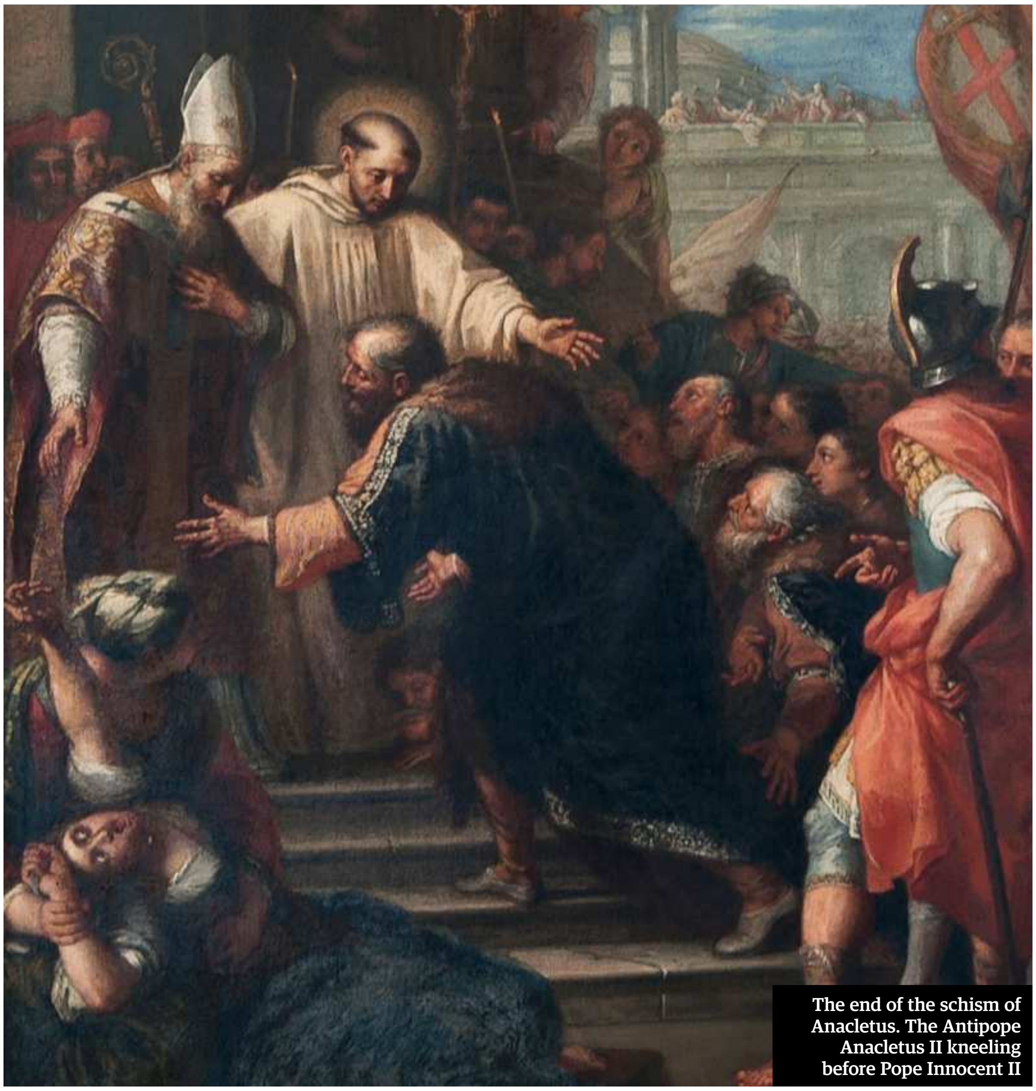


Pope Innocent II's early years as pope were mired in controversy and rivalry with Antipope Anacletus II



Pope Celestine II's papacy ran for less than a year, from September 1143 to March 1144



The end of the schism of Anacletus. The Antipope Anacletus II kneeling before Pope Innocent II

that made them iconic figures). They didn't have to pay tax on land in the order's possession but could collect tax from people renting said land or living on properties. Money gleaned from their endeavours was to be used exclusively for Templar-associated business.

Pope Innocent II also used the papal bull to heap lavish praise on the order. "Through inspiring grace you became attentive hearers of the Gospel, having forsaken worldly ostentation and private property, indeed having abandoned the wide path that leads towards death, you humbly chose the hard way that leads to life and in order to justify being considered among the knighthood of God you always bear on your chest the sign of the life-giving cross," he waxed lyrical. The irony of using words such as 'humbly' and 'worldly ostentation' and 'private property' is the pope's edict essentially bestowing carte blanche on the Templars, and it led to them accruing immense wealth and numerous properties. While technically no individual owned anything, it was all for the good of the cause; in time they became richer than kings and entire kingdoms.

Pope Innocent II set the Templar ball rolling, and though Pope Celestine II's reign lasted barely seven months, from September 1143 to his death in March 1144, he issued a papal bull related to the ongoing support of the Templars. January 1144's *Milites Templi* (Knights of the Temple) reconfirmed things in the 1139 bull and added such items as those who joined the order were guaranteed Christian burial, as part of the spiritual rewards given to those who signed up and encouraged people - from kings to ordinary citizens - to donate to the cause. For, as *Milites Templi* extolled, these virtuous men devoted to this virtuous enterprise and their "holy and pious work," lacked the necessary funds to do so. Those who donated were given a sweetener: relief from penance. In other words, handing over goods, property and money to the Templars was an act of devotion to the Church and the Lord. In the great age of *Imitatio Christi* (Imitation of Christ), a theological ideal of following in the footsteps of Christ, later morphing into the Crusade-specific 'taking up the cross', *Milites Templi* was all about further promoting the order and its numerous spiritual benefits. "The Templars, new Maccabees in this time of Grace, renouncing earthly desires and possessions, bearing his cross, are followers of Christ," the bull explained.

Even more extravagantly, the Templars were able to open churches placed under 'Interdict' and collect donations on one day of the year. Under canon law, Interdict could be applied to an individual (a priest) or locality (a church or parish). It was essentially a ban on participating in the sacred rites - robbing a person of their spiritual life and placing them in a sort of limbo, until - and if - it was lifted. The bull also approved of Christian warriors taking the lives of pagans in the cause of the battle for the Holy Land. Like Pope Innocent's *Omne datum optimum*, *Milites Templi* established the order's spiritual honour and credibility, along with the foundations of accruing power and wealth.

The Templars became a powerhouse institution. They built and amassed properties all over Europe and the Middle East

1145's *Militia Dei* (Knighthood of God) was issued by Pope Eugene III, elected in February 1145, and a friend of Bernard of Clairvaux, the Cistercian theologian and great admirer of the Templars. The Templars had the right to build private oratories, appoint their own private priests to administer religious services and have their dead buried in special cemeteries. The collection of tithes and rents would fill the coffers with even more money, turning estates into agricultural industries. Again, any wealth accrued was exempt from taxation.

Without *Omne datum optimum*, *Milites Templi* and *Militia Dei*, the Templars would not have been so successful in the formative years of the order, nor would they have accrued their enormous list of assets from generous benefactors. Real estate assets grew to include ports, castles, churches and other properties. The Templars effectively built an empire within empires. From knights kicking the dust of Jerusalem without much sense of purpose to becoming in their day an international banking outfit, the Templars would not have achieved all they achieved without recognition from the Vatican. They boasted a special combination of fanaticism, piousness, fierceness, skill in combat and the ability to make friends in very high places. It was politics as much as piety, which established the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Jerusalem and led to their dominance for 192 years, and it was politics under the guise of piety that eventually brought them down. In the order's lifetime, they became true power players and their influence spread to all facets of medieval life and business.

The final bulls

What the pope giveth, he also taketh away

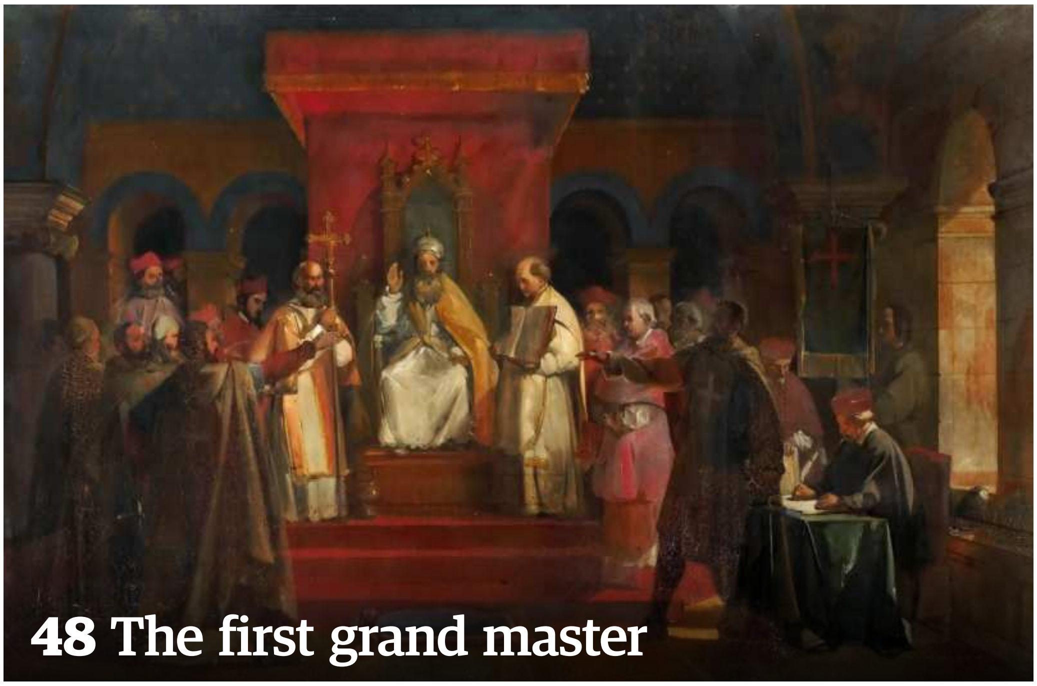
In the early 14th century, the tide began to turn against the Templars. Reform had long been on the cards, including a potential merger with the Order of St John. Blithely ignoring the supremacy of the papacy on ecclesiastical matters, King Philip IV of France (1268-1314) instigated moves against the Knights Templar (ostensibly to steal their property and money because he was flat broke), which he promoted under the guise of investigating heresy.

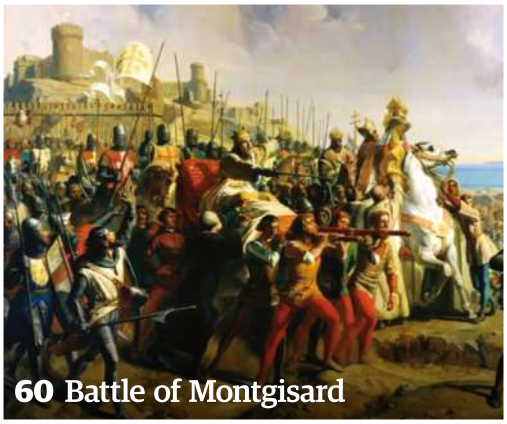
Following the infamous mass arrests on Friday 13 October 1307, Pope Clement V attempted to wrest control of a befuddling situation, issuing *Pastoralis praeeminentae* (Pastoral pre-eminence) that November, which served to remind Christian kings in Europe that the papacy was the ultimate authority on spiritual concerns.

In August 1308, Clement V issued *Faciens misericordiam* (Granting forgiveness), which essentially set up two forms of commission - papal and diocesan. Yet he was constantly under immense political pressures from Philip, leaving Clement V little choice but to go along with the suppression. A range of bulls, such as *Vox in excelso*, *Ad providam* and *Nuper in concilio*, issued throughout 1312, put a definitive stop to the Knights Templar as an organisation, and handed over their assets to the Order of St John.

Pope Clement V's *Ad providam* bull, gifting the Order of St John a great majority of the Templars' assets

TEMPLARS IN THEIR PRIME

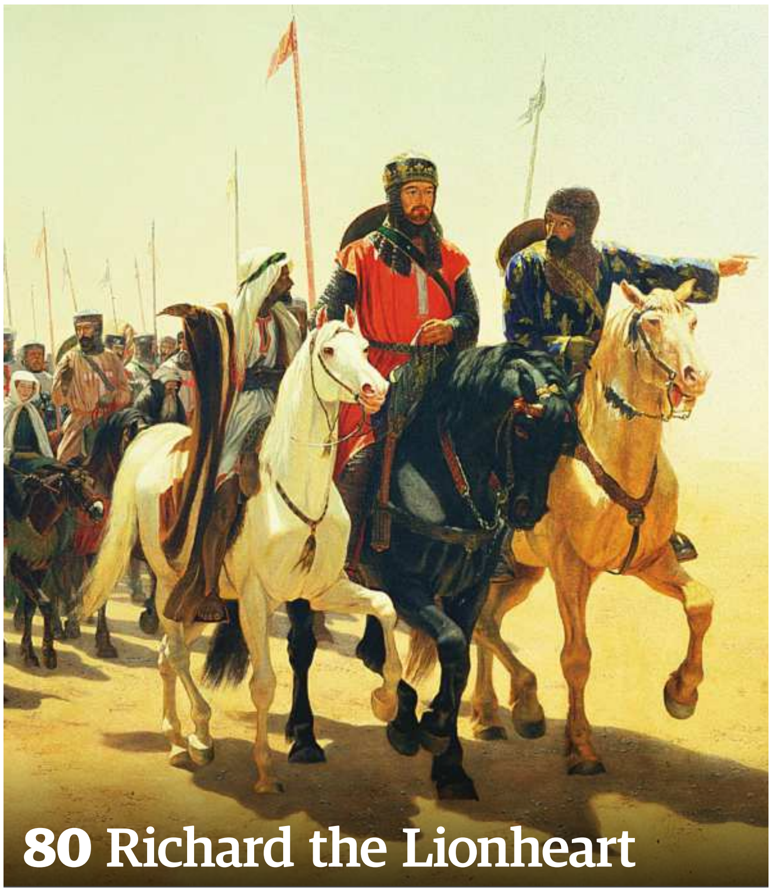

48 The first grand master


60 Battle of Montgisard

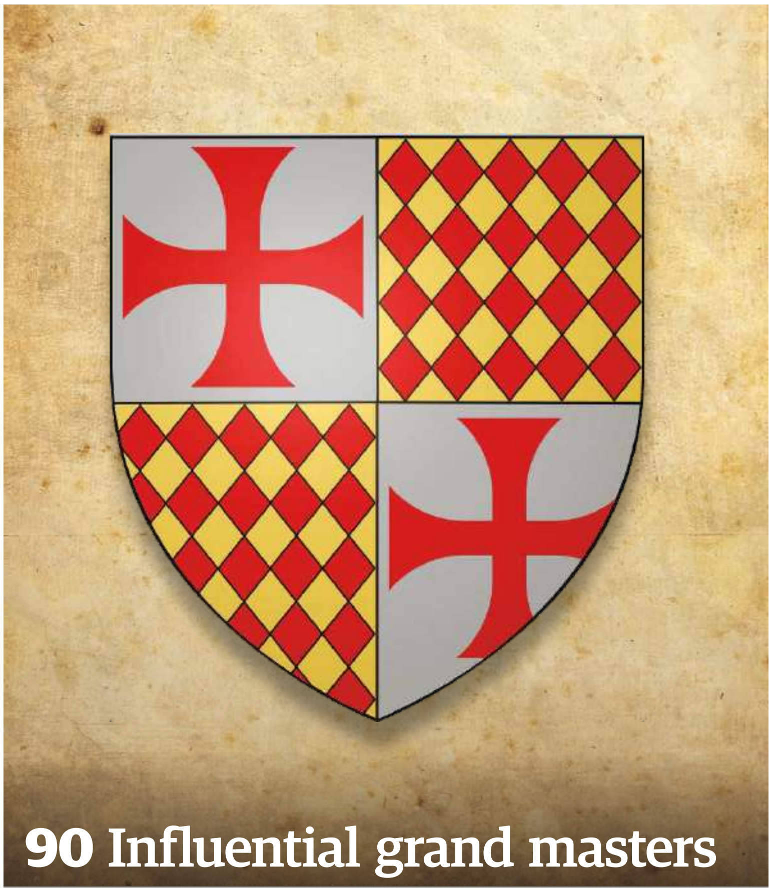
64 Templar banking

54 Templar establishments in Europe

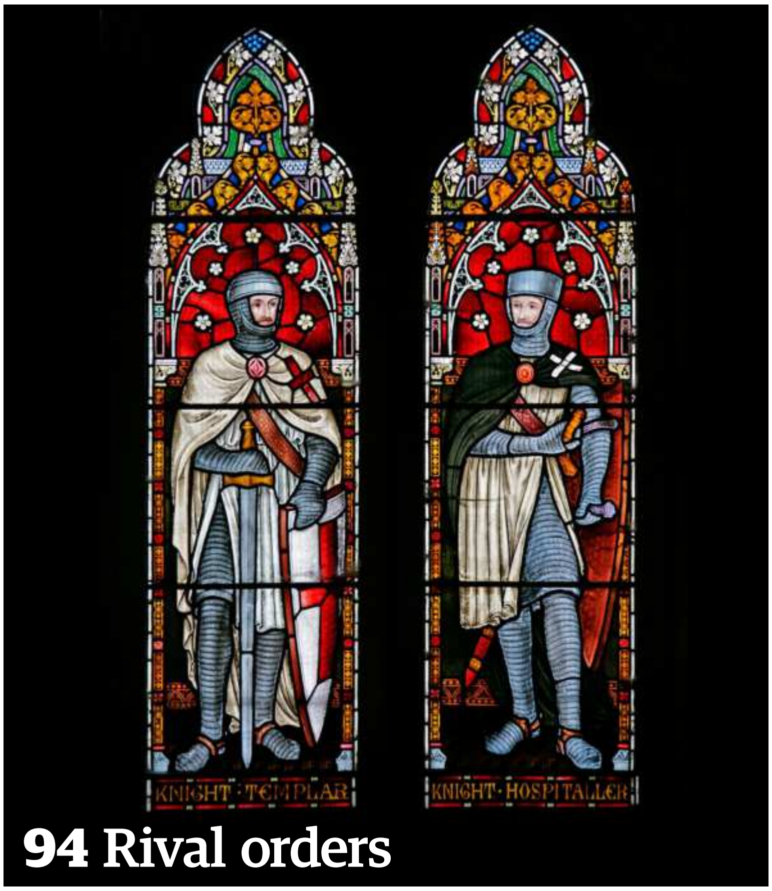
70 Saladin's battle for Jerusalem



80 Richard the Lionheart



90 Influential grand masters


KNIGHT · TEMPLAR
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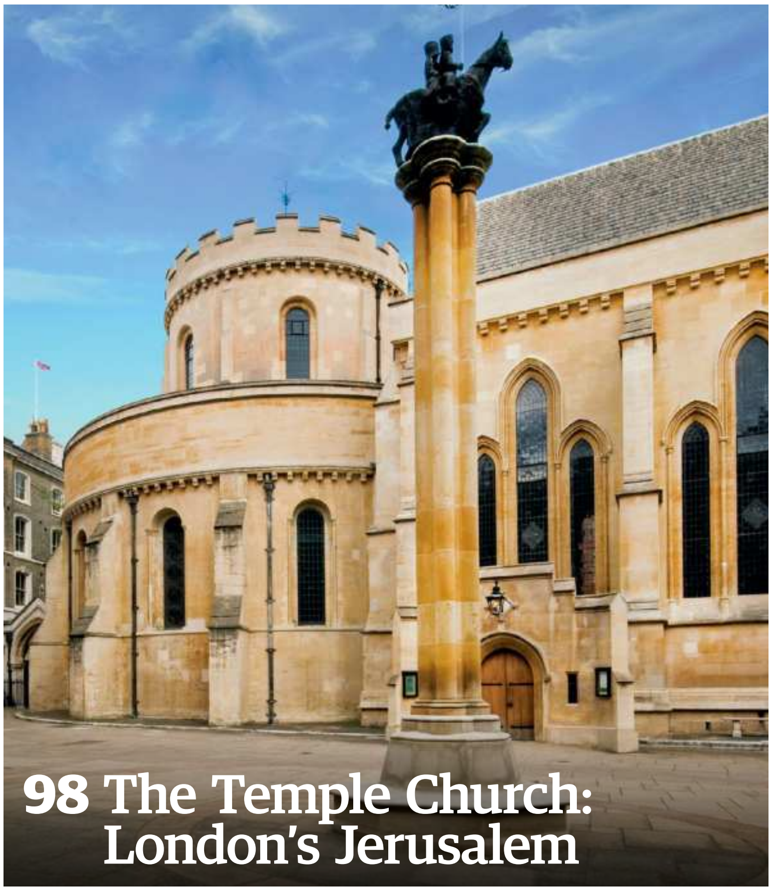
94 Rival orders



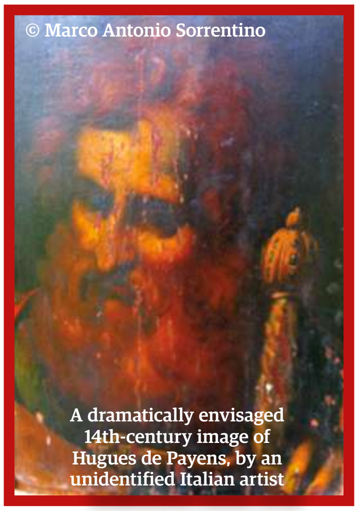
98 The Temple Church: London's Jerusalem

The first grand master

The first Knights Templar grand master, Hugues de Payens, is a mysterious figure to history, but he was instrumental to the founding of the organisation

Written by Martyn Conterio

The Knights Templar was founded by Hugues de Payens in the febrile aftermath of unexpected victory. The First Crusade (1095-1099) was called by Pope Urban II (c. 1035-1099) to help combat the Seljuq Turks and the existential threat they posed to the Byzantine Empire. The gathered Frankish armies (known as the Princes' Crusade) went one further than the assigned role of rescuers: they recaptured Jerusalem and massacred the remaining inhabitants. The violence they wrought as victors was savage and uncompromising. Bodies were mutilated and carved open, crusaders searching for jewels and coins that citizens might have swallowed to hide. For centuries, clerics had debated whether it was righteous for Christians to take lives. After all, Jesus Christ preached peace. In the end, as seen by the politics of the region and the formation of the Templars and other warrior-monk outfits, the debate was settled: killing pagans was deemed just.

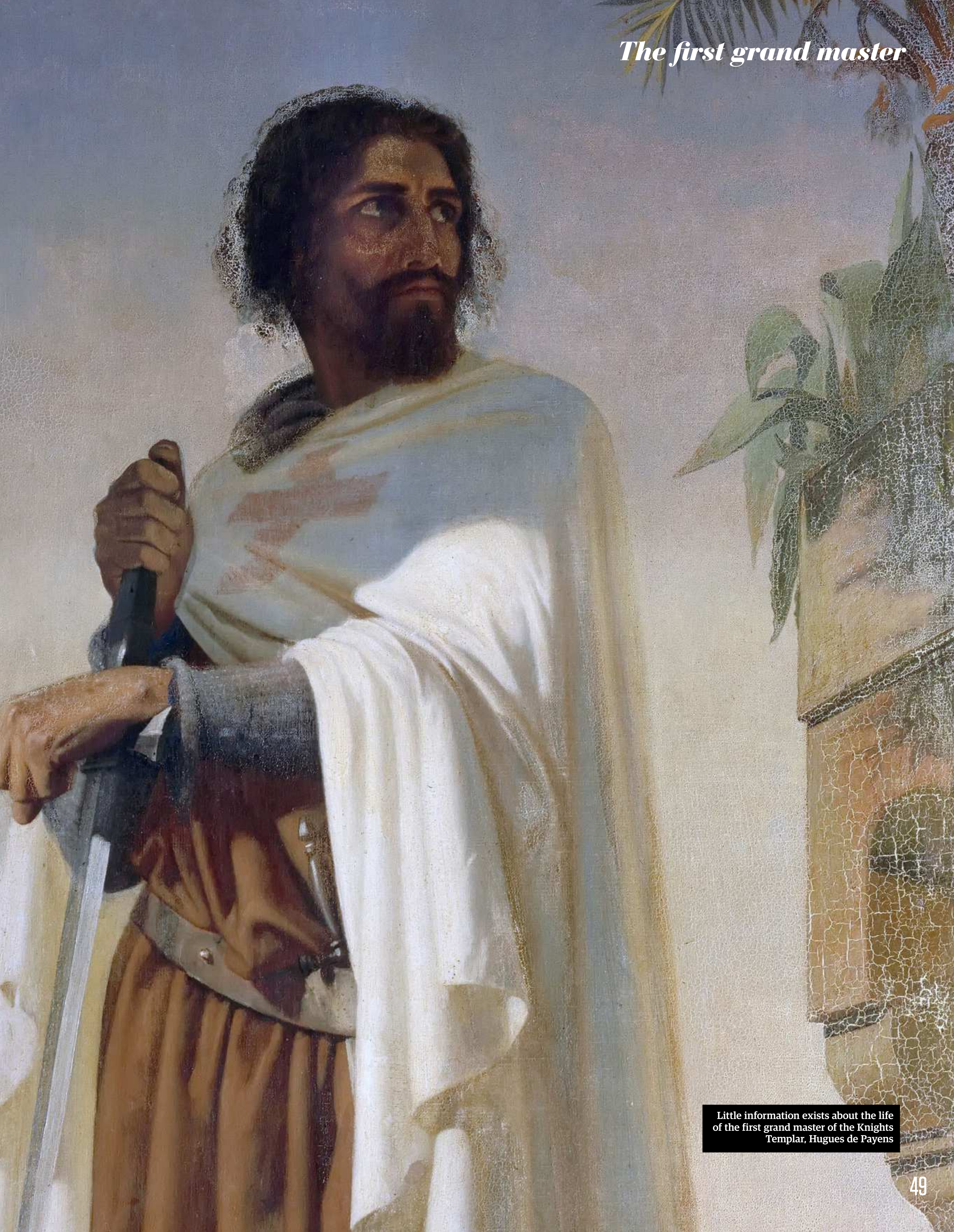

© Marco Antonio Sorrentino

A dramatically envisaged 14th-century image of Hugues de Payens, by an unidentified Italian artist

The establishment of the Crusader states (the county of Edessa, the kingdom of Jerusalem, the county of Tripoli and the principality of Antioch) meant what was initially a bid to help Byzantine Christians became essentially a landgrab and establishment of a Catholic East. Along with the Reconquista on the Iberian peninsula, an attempt to beat back centuries of Islamic rule in what today is the southern regions of Spain, Europe and the Near East became embroiled in centuries-spanning bloody battles between the Crescent and the Cross.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land had long been an affirmed part of Christian life and cultural heritage, but the path to Jerusalem was far from an easy one, even after the successful conquest and establishment of the small Crusader states. But victory certainly increased the trend for pilgrimage, and folk from across Europe made their way, seeking enlightenment, prayer and relief from penance. However, they were wide open to attack from bandits, slavers, pirates and skirmishes with Muslim tribes and factions, who had retreated to the outer-reach areas of Palestine, none too impressed with their Frankish invaders. The road from Jaffa to Jerusalem was especially perilous, with Medieval pilgrim-scholars noting more than once how routes were littered with the rotting corpses of those who had come a cropper in their search for what represented the ultimate holy experience – the places and sites associated with Jesus Christ. By 1119, the Crusader states were in precarious positions. The Seljuq Turks and the Fatimids of Egypt engaged the overstretched and underfunded Frankish armies in battle. Two

The first grand master



Little information exists about the life of the first grand master of the Knights Templar, Hugues de Payens massacres that year, in which Christians were put to the sword in their hundreds, meant this was very much a time of crisis.

Whether he took part in the Siege of Jerusalem or entered the Holy Land with a retinue as part of a Frankish house making pilgrimage years after, there is little information that exists about the life of first grand master of the Knights Templars, Hugues de Payens (c. 1070-1136). There is even lack of clarity about his exact origins. Was he French or Italian? This air of mystery ties in, too, with the Templars and their founding in 1119, with accounts only written decades later, when it was flourishing and established. Payens was undoubtedly a man of high standing and charisma, for he found audience with powerful men. His hailing from eastern France is intriguing because he forged political alliances with the Cistercians and royal houses in the Champagne region. Both Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugh of Champagne were early supporters of the Templars.

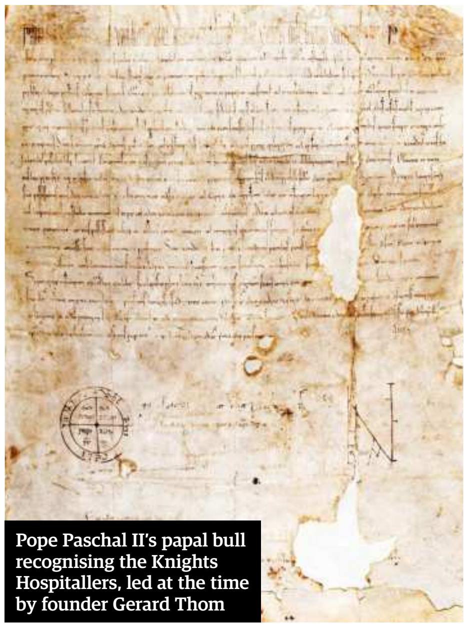
The very earliest years of the Knights Templar were lived in destitution and they relied on donations from local clergy (including leftover food scraps from the Hospitallers). This poor fraternity was centred around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Hugues de Payens and his men

The rival order

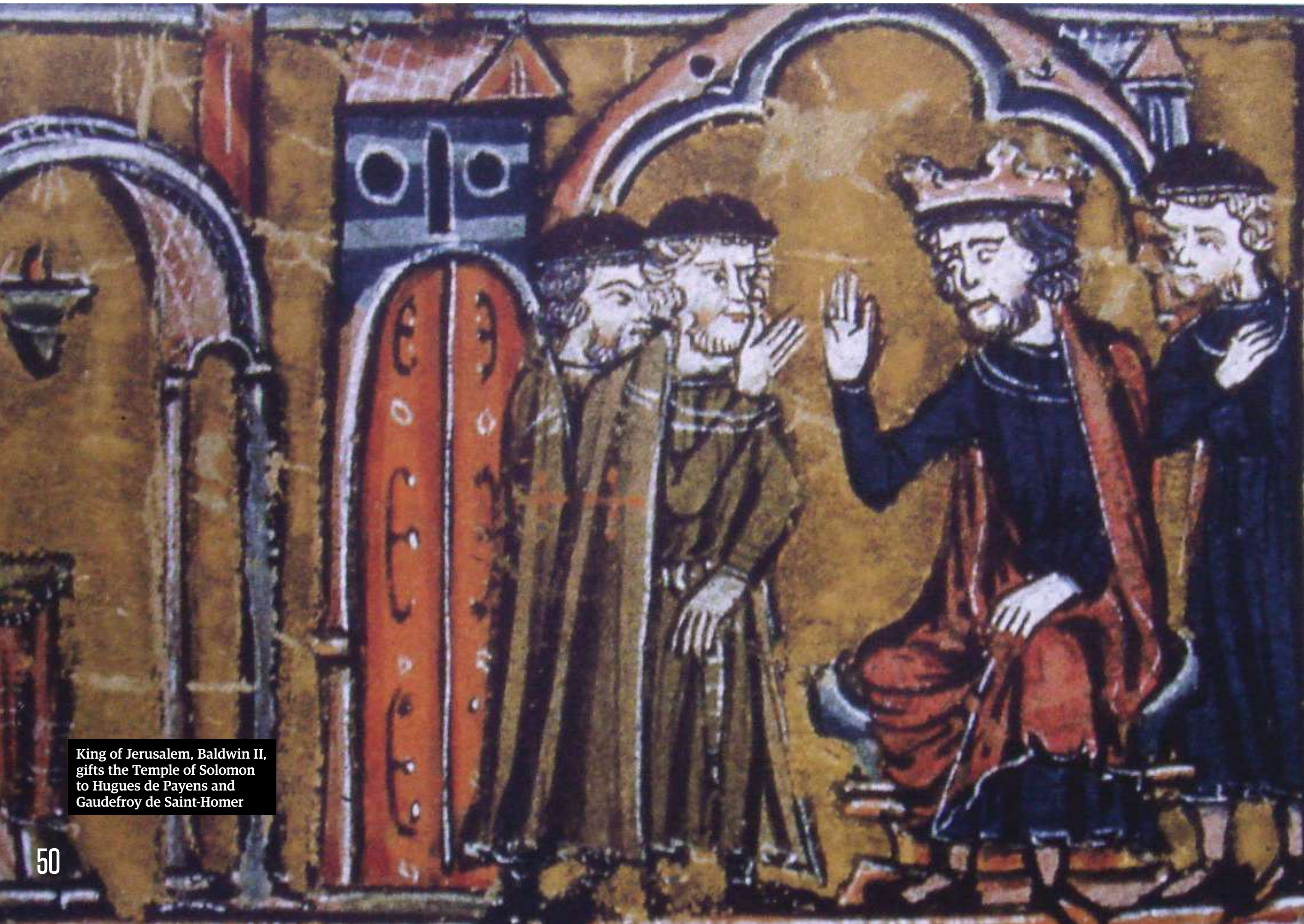
In 1113 Pope Paschal II issued a papal bull, known as *Pie postulatio voluntatis*. It recognised the Knights Hospitaller. The order sprung up in the years after the First Crusade, ostensibly to protect Christian pilgrims, though their main priority and remit was tending to the sick and wounded. At this moment, they were not the powerful militarised order, which would one day rival the Templars.

The roots of the Hospitallers and their presence in Jerusalem went back decades before the First Crusade. Their name was derived from the hospital founded by Italian merchants close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was built on the site of the former Monastery of St. John (founded in 603 and destroyed in 1005 by the armies of Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah). In 1023, permission was given by the Caliph of Egypt to build a new hospital (highlighting a time of relative tolerance between Muslims and Christians).

Raymond of Puy, who succeeded founder and first grand master Gerard Thom in 1120, turned the order into a potent and formidable fighting force, which united tending to the sick with the protection of the Holy Land. He also cannily switched the order's Augustine rule for a Benedictine one.



Pope Paschal II's papal bull recognising the Knights Hospitallers, led at the time by founder Gerard Thom



King of Jerusalem, Baldwin II, gifts the Temple of Solomon to Hugues de Payens and Gaudefroy de Saint-Homer pledged obedience to Gerard, the church prior. As well as a tourist spot, the Holy Sepulchre formed a hangout and meeting point, and it is here where this new band of brothers began to pick up political momentum in Jerusalem as a newly formed group. Their early backer was Baldwin II, king of the city. What these men needed was a purpose in life. They acted as security guards, hired muscle, protecting weary pilgrims from attack.

Hugues de Payens spent his days convincing pilgrims and ex-pat knights to sign up to the cause. These men were not from among the clergy, per se, but they were devout, experienced in battle and appeared to be intent on living a monastic-style existence. Hugues became their leader and is therefore considered their founder. From this point, to his death in 1036, the first grand master's actions were dominatingly political in focus and far-reaching.

In January 1120, the Council of Nablus gathered to set forth laws by which the Holy Land could be governed. The Council made 25 decrees, two of which had direct influence on the burgeoning order. They related to clergyman taking up arms in defence of the realm. These men were free from guilt in taking lives, and armed clergy might serve to defend the Holy Land. The newly founded fraternity were also given independence from an initial attachment to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Baldwin II gifted the Templars a wing in the building long associated with the Temple of Solomon, thus lending the order its name: the Knights Templar, the abbreviation of 'The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Jerusalem'.

By mid-1125, the Templars were well established in the holy city as defenders of pilgrims, the Christian kingdom and accompanying sites associated with the Bible. Hugues de Payens was now recognised as the Master of the Temple. The grand master's first political success was in befriending Baldwin II. Some time circa 1126, he wrote to Bernard of Clairvaux, praising the Templars and asking him to support them in the quest for support from the papacy and the writing of a Benedictine rule, by which they may conduct their lives and business. Baldwin II explained emissaries from the Templars were en route to Europe (Rome). In 1127, they arrived.

The mission home was twofold: to essentially big up the Templars and establish stronger links between the Crusader states and royal houses, who could help finance the defence of the realm, as Baldwin II was plotting to siege Damascus with Templar support. Hugues of Payens travelled with fellow Templars Godfrey of St. Omer, Rolan, Payen of Mondidier and Archambaud of St. Armand. Between 1127 and early 1129, the men ventured widely and were received by aristocrats and granted audiences with kings, including Henry I, King of England and Duke of Burgundy. It was, in effect, what today would be recognised as 'networking', with Hugues being remarkably successful at it. The meeting with Henry I allowed the Templar delegation to head on over to England and begin work there. Hugues also

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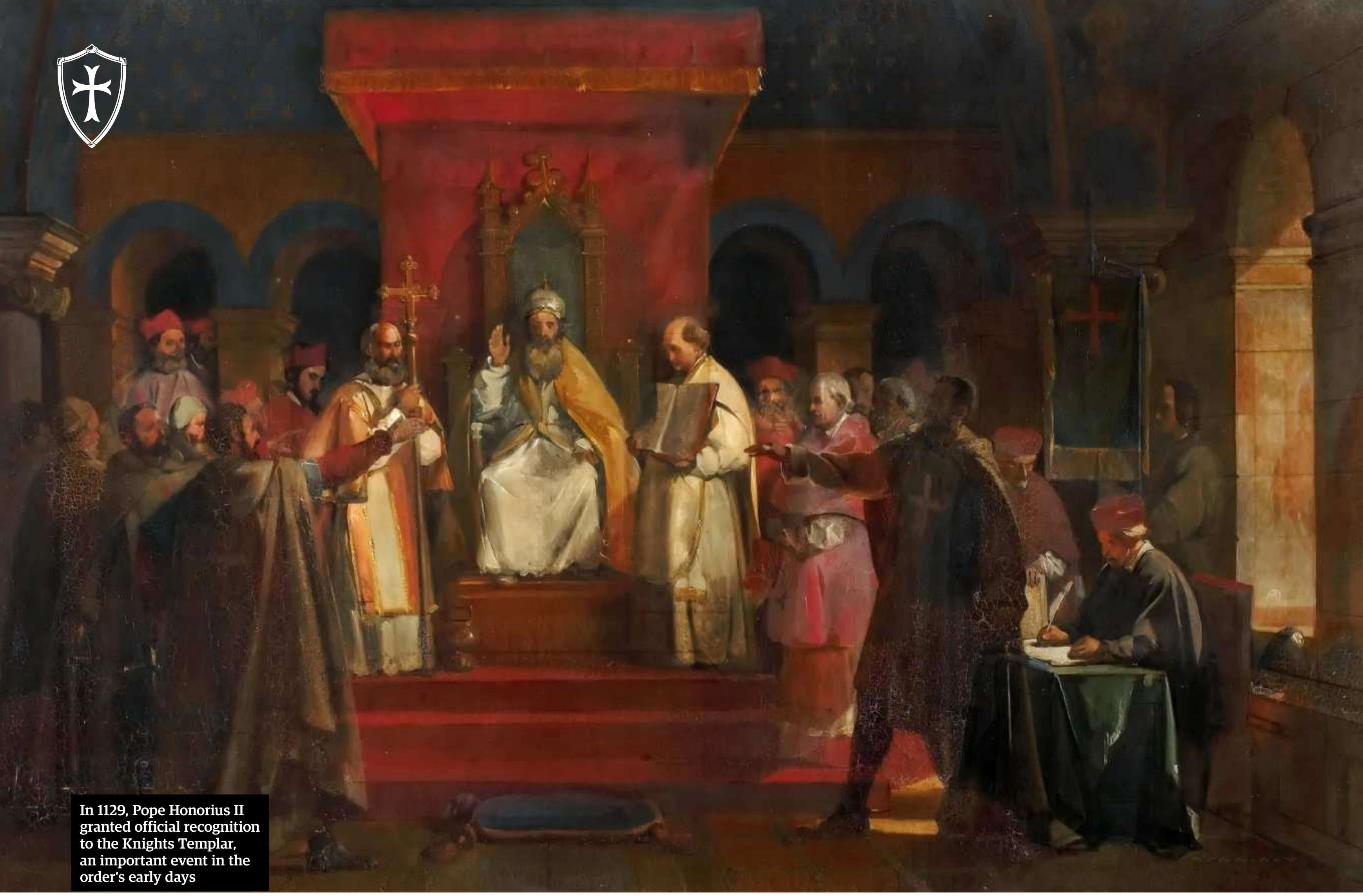
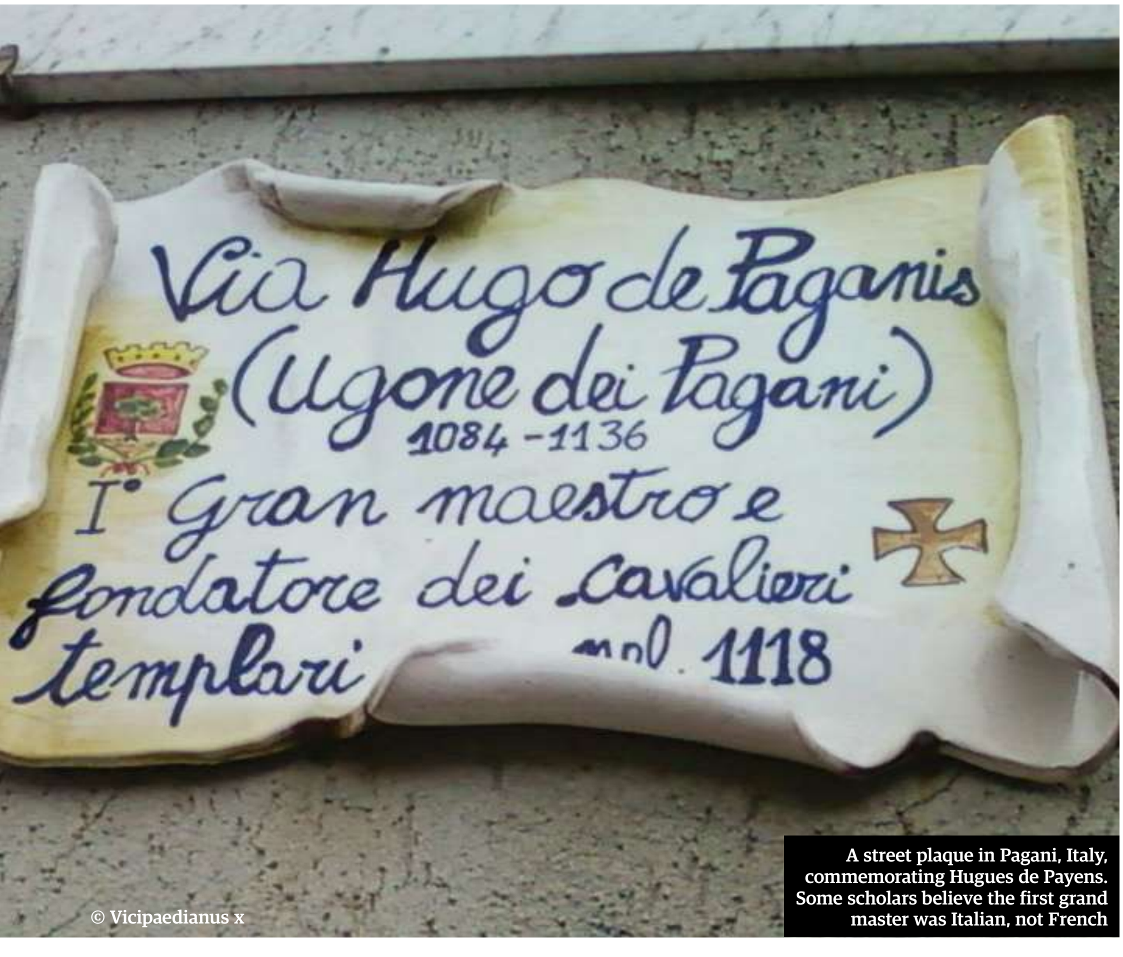


In 1129, Pope Honorius II granted official recognition to the Knights Templar, an important event in the order's early days



A street plaque in Pagani, Italy, commemorating Hugues de Payens. Some scholars believe the first grand master was Italian, not French

© Vicipaedianus x

used his time to preach about the Damascus plain and recruit potential members - for every person they met was a potential recruit or donor. However, the most important aspect of the trip was yet to be fulfilled: recognition from the papacy.

Hugues travelled to London and as far as Scotland. He met King David I (1084-1153) and was granted land. In time, the Templars' association with Scotland would enter folklore and counter-history, given the obsession with the Holy Grail and Rosslyn Chapel. Hugues' trip north of Hadrian's Wall, however, was purely to spread the message. Before he left English shores, he appointed an England-based prior of the Temple. While the trip was never about setting up bases in Europe, somebody needed to stay behind, so the newly created position would oversee the management of estates and donations made to the Templars. The prior of the Temple was to ensure the riches were transported successfully back to Templar HQ (the Temple of Solomon). The original base of the Templar organisation was in the Holborn area of London, before moving slightly to the south decades later, to the area that is today known as Temple. In 1185, they built the famous - and still extant - Temple Church.

By any stretch, Hugues' delegation to Europe was a success. In January 1129, the master of the Temple and his brethren took part in the Council of Troyes. Papal legate, the Bishop of Albano, attended, representing Pope Honorius II. It was the grand master's great hope that his order would be granted a quasi-monastic rule and recognition from the

Pope (which they achieved). The Rule was drafted as a 68-point (and very strict) code of conduct, arranged by the zealous Bernard of Clairvaux. The Rule covered everything from the selection process to clothes, to prayers to self-mortification to public morality. They were to avoid any physical contact with women: "No brother shall presume to kiss neither widow, nor virgin, nor mother, nor sister, nor aunt, nor any other woman. Let the Knighthood shun feminine kisses."

Regarding their white mantle, the Rule stated: "For what is whiteness but perfect chastity, and chastity the purity of the soul and the health of the body." The Templars' unique uniform with the iconic red cross was aided by the Rule, which forbade other orders from wearing white. "It is granted to none to wear white habits, or to have white mantles, excepting the above-named knights of Christ." Black or brown habits were to be worn by members lower in rank. The stark dress was a contrast to the garb usually sported by knights in this period, which was typically ostentatious. The Rule stated the Templars were permitted to kill, too. "This armed company of knights may kill the enemies of the cross."

Hugues spoke at length to the gathered clergy. "We heard in common chapter from the lips of the … Master, Brother Hugues de Payens; and according to the limitations of our understanding we praised what seemed to us good and beneficial, and eschewed what seemed wrong," the record of the council described. The Rule also had to get around the fact the Templars were warrior-monks, with often an emphasis placed on the warrior aspects. How could they be at prayer when they're likely fighting on the field of battle or acting as security to pilgrims? The Rule allowed them to make up missed services by reciting the Lord's Prayer a set amount of times. It was imperative the monastic elements of the Templars be maintained.

For Hugues, the Rule affirmed his position and the position of his successors. The grand master's word was the word of God. An order could not be refused and must be carried out exactly as instructed. The Rule stated an order given by the grand master must be treated as if "Christ himself had commanded it." It also fell under Hugues' remit to examine applications from new recruits. Open to prince or pauper, becoming a Templar was not easy. While in the early days they preached to all, they would not readily accept anybody. Recruits must demonstrate their pious character. When aristocrat Hugues d'Amboise attempted to sign up to the cause, he was vetoed by his namesake. He wasn't fit for the order and an investigation into his life brought up unsavoury aspects. If any person wishing to join the Templars had affairs to settle, spiritually and monetarily, they had to make restitution before the order would consider their application. Such was the new-found enthusiasm for the Templars, the King of Aragon (Alfonso the Battler, c. 1073-1134) bequeathed his fortune to them, a will that was naturally disputed by his unimpressed heirs. Kings, too, were known to abdicate on their deathbeds and take the vows so they may be buried as Templars and achieve salvation.

As mysteriously as he entered history in 1119, as the man said to have founded the Templars and given the distinction of first grand master, Hugues de Payens died on 24 May 1136. There is no account of his death. The attack against Damascus in 1129, which the Templars were involved in and Hugues had promoted on his trip to Europe, was a mess and hardly painted the order in a favourable light. Poor tactical decisions, bad weather, atrocious lack of discipline and bad conduct led to failure.

Hugues de Payens' legacy is the establishment of the Templars and his remarkable knack for making friends in very high places. The Templars served the clergy very well as a fighting enterprise. They represented a Christian ideal by turning secularised entities (knights) into God's fierce warriors. The Knights Templar became the preeminent militaristic-monastic order of the Middle Ages. However, their downfall was as rapid as their rise. Through his charismatic mix of religious conviction and political nous, Hugues de Payens created and built during his lifetime a sturdy bedrock foundation for the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ to flourish in their devout mission to serve God and protect the Crusader states.

The Al-Aqsa mosque today, site of the Knights Templar international headquarters from 1119 to 1187

© David Shankbone

Bernard of Clairvaux

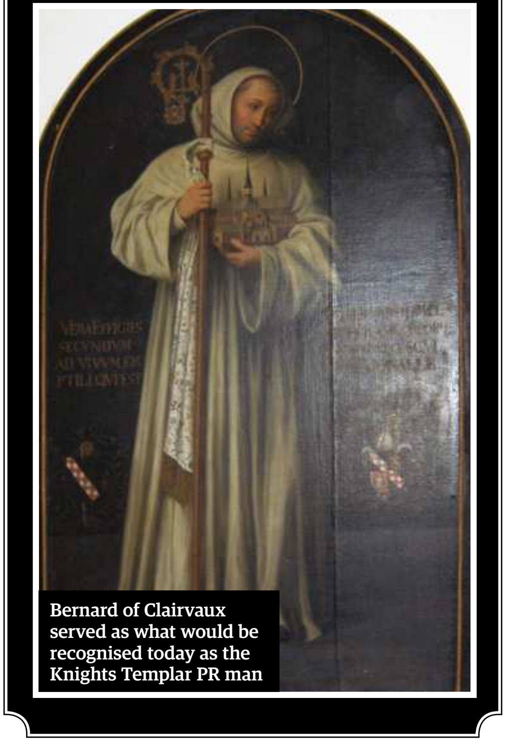
The Knight's Templar 'PR man'

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) became renowned in his lifetime as a theologian of the highest esteem and founder of the isolated monastery at Clairvaux. He was canonised as St. Bernard in 1174 and made a Doctor of the Church in 1830.

A somewhat harsh individual, he was also eloquent, thoughtful, passionate and charismatic. His zeal for the Church impressed, as well as his living an austere and frugal life as a Cistercian (the reformist order founded in Cîteaux, which Bernard joined, promoted and made famous across Europe). In his day, Bernard was not above getting into arguments of doctrine with rival monastic orders or individuals (famously Peter Abelard). He castigated popes and kings, too, when they displeased him. Throughout his life, Bernard made friends and enemies in equal measure.

Increasingly concerned with the politics of the Church, Bernard's early pet project was the establishment of a new outfit of warrior-monks. To the Cistercian scholar, the Knights Templar represented an ideal bunch with so much ready-made potential. They fulfilled his vision of a Christian army who could secure the Holy Land and rid it of 'pagan' elements. In the schismatic dispute over the election of a new pope, upon the death of Honorius II, in 1130, Bernard took a key role in discussions, and sided with Gregario Papareschi (Pope Innocent II) against Piero Pierleoni (Antipope Anacletus II).

One of the most famous and important clergymen in Church history, Bernard was pivotal to the establishment of the Knights Templar and validated their holy cause.



Bernard of Clairvaux served as what would be recognised today as the Knights Templar PR man

Templar establishments in Europe

The order's defence of Christendom was only made possible by its vast network of businesses and estates, linked by land and sea, from Ireland to Acre

Written by Hareth Al Bustani

Though the nine initial Templars did not even have a fixed abode, and dressed in donated clothing, by the time of their dissolution in 1307, they had grown into a veritable financial, military and cultural empire spread across Europe and Asia. Initially tasked with protecting Christian pilgrims, as their ranks swelled, so too did their scope. Though the order was, by design, a militaristic one, the enterprise of war could not be conducted without a financial backbone.

While the Templars' initial decade was a time of remarkable growth, it was followed by a time of remarkable loss. The Order lost 60 of its 67 men at Harim in 1164, and 290 knights at the 1187 Battles of Cresson and Hattin. It cost 90 livres tournois to maintain a knight in Acre for a year, making the replacement and maintenance of Eastern troops extremely expensive. Later, at the devastating Battle of La Forbie in 1244, only 33 of the Templars' 300 knights survived. The less capable order of St. Lazarus, meanwhile, was wiped out completely. During Louis IX's first Crusade, the annual income of the French monarchy was 250,000 livres tournois - the loss of Templar men at La Forbie constituted a ninth of this sum.

Eager to relieve the Templars' burden, Pope Urban III ordered the Archbishop of Canterbury and prelates in England to provide them with horses and arms. However, this was little help - they required 4,000 horses, each consuming 11 kilograms of food and six gallons of water a day. From 1140 to 1180, war costs boomed, as the price of horses tripled, and then doubled by 1220. While a Burgundian knight in 1180 could sustain himself on 750 acres of land, by 1260 he would need five times that.

In order to meet the mounting fiscal demands, the Templars established a network of local chapters, or preceptories, across Europe - each paying one third of their income to their counterparts in the East. Just as a secular ruler or pope might levy taxes for war or crusades, in trying times the grand master might require all preceptories to pay an 'extraordinary tax' - such as in 1261, when the master of Acre imposed a levy for the purchase of the city of Sidon.

Templars lived communally, sharing all their possessions, sometimes with dozens of men. An average preceptory might house hundreds of animals, many acres of farmland, half a tonne of wine in reserve, silverware, mills and scores of servants. Their chapels were staffed with the order's own clergy, and chaplains held services, heard confessions, absolved minor offenses and conducted funerals. They were filled with beautiful relics from across the world, often with an occult edge - such items included a vial of Christ's blood, and fragments of the True Cross.

New recruits provided a steady stream of income. Hugh of Bourbouton, head of a family with vast estates in the east and south of Richerenches, joined the Templars in 1139 and later became a master. He and his son donated all their worldly possessions to the order - land, mills, wine, grain, animals, houses

Almourol Castle, along Portugal's River Ebro, is among the country's most magnificent. After being captured, it was rebuilt by the Templars

The Templars established a network of preceptories across Europe, weaving together fortresses, farms, cities, chapels, ports and a wide range of businesses

and their furnishings, along with tenants and their families. Though these donations were voluntary, married recruits had to hand over their houses, fields and cash. Should they die, their wives would receive only enough to subsist.

As the Templars grew in repute, association with the knights of Christendom became a prestigious affiliation. In the deeply religious Middle Age European society, everyone from the wealthiest noble to the most deprived peasant had to accept that salvation most likely lay beyond their grasp. Instead, they faced an eternity of unconscionable suffering. However, the Knights Templar offered a glimpse of hope - the slim chance of redemption through sacrifice, be it physical, spiritual or material.

For the wealthy, a sizable donation might just tip the balance in one's favour. Though thwarted by his successors, the heirless King Alfonso I of Aragon was so moved by the Templars that he intended to split his kingdom between them, the Hospitallers and the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre. Instead, they received castles, along with dependant territories, a tenth of royal revenues, an annual payment of 1,000 solidi and exemption from certain tolls and customs.

Some lords put their bodies on the line, serving with the order in the East, and in return were buried on Templar ground with daily prayers read for their souls. Others contented themselves with grants and legacies. Christian generosity from particularly pious local lords and prelates was what truly made it possible to establish footholds in new regions and communities. While King Garcia of Navarre gave the Templars the right to trade, Alfonso VII of Castille granted them an abandoned village, adding: "If, however, someone from my family or another should later attempt perversely to overturn my

Still standing

Existing Knight's Templar sites

In Spain, King Alfonso VI of Castile built the monastery of San Servando in recognition of Saints Servando and Germano. However, its strategic location, near the Roman Alcantara Bridge, made it a no-brainer for the frontline against the Moors. A castle was built on the site of an Arab fortification and later gifted to the Templars by King Alfonso VIII. Today, visitors enjoy tours of the supposedly 'haunted' site, searching for the ghost of the cruel Templar knight Don Nuño Alvear.

In England, Cressing Temple in Essex was the order's first land grant in England - a gift from Queen Matilda and King Stephen, who presided over the Anarchy. The Templars developed the farming community into one of Essex's most significant estates. Today, two Grade-I listed timber barns survive, which are among the oldest and best-preserved in Europe. Initially handed over to the Knights Hospitaller, it was later sacked in the Peasants Revolt of 1381, and served as a Royalist estate during the Civil War.

At the heart of the French network of commanderies in Causse du Larzac was La Couvertoirade, a fortress complete with its own dungeon and two looming towers. La Couvertoirade was the only Templar castle built in France, and it housed up to 600 inhabitants. The Knights Hospitaller later developed it, adding imposing curtain walls.

The Templars' Iberian holdings, such as the Spanish castle of San Servando, tended to be more fortified than the those in the rest of Europe

With the prospects of eternal salvation low, Christians gave generously to preceptories, hoping to be buried on Templar ground, and have prayers read for their souls

donation, may he be cursed by God and damned in Hell with Judas the traitor."

Strategic locations, such as Hugues de Payens' homeland of Champagne, gave the Brothers access to the great cycle of trade fairs and weekly markets. The Champagne preceptory at Riems began as a small church, gifted by the archbishop, to which the order added a dormitory and stables. It tapped into the sizable local population masterfully, drawing support from all strata of society and becoming one of eastern France's most important Templar hubs.

Its local obituary roll, which listed deceased donors from the 1160s through to 1307, ran 42 pages long. The preceptory's benefactors included King Philip II of France, an archbishop, bishop, count, countess, 34 clerics, a minter and a baker. All 197 non-Templars would have either left their own donation, or had one given on their behalf. These offerings took the forms of cash, vineyards, land, corn, horses, market stalls, and even the use of lamp oil for special occasions.

At Provins, the Templars held 70 properties, including a town square and various shops. They also ran a number of preceptories in the surrounding region. Here, the Templars enjoyed a mix of commercial trade and spiritual gifts. In 1171, for example, a man named Henry la Borde traded them his stone house and buildings adjoining it, for a Templar house and 60 livres. On the other hand, in 1211, Ansell of Quincy and his wife granted the order two fruit stalls for free - a spiritual investment.

The Templars not only reared horses and pack animals, but operated mills, exploited fishing rights along the River Varenne, and operated as landlords outside the city. They would farm their own estates, vineyards and woodland, while monopolising rights on mills, ovens and wine-presses - drawing in tithes, rent and other income. They leased a tile factory to a man called Gilbert, who, for 10 years, had to pay an annual fee of six livres provins. Moreover, he was obligated to deliver tiles to the Temple at a fixed price and put up a deposit of personal goods worth 30 livres provins - showcasing the shrewdness of Templar negotiations.

Spreading the Templar reach not only increased prestige, but access to new industries. In Tuscany, they mined the hills for copper, iron and alum - setting up hospices for pilgrims and ancillary financial hubs. In Huesca, in northern Aragon, they invested in vineyards, orchards, olive groves, pasture lands, mills and a pigeon loft. They purchased houses and shops throughout the city and were gifted a palace, adjacent to their preceptory. Lords Garcia Lopez and Jiminez of Albero even granted the Templars eternal free access to the water that flowed through their properties, in return for a pocket of land.

In the absence of great generosity, holdings were bolstered through cumulative unspectacular donations. While some Templars donated vast sums upon their initiation, others offered what little they had. One man, Peter of Escau, handed over his villa, lands, body and soul, in return for a lifetime of sustenance. In the Aude Valley, a knight called Raymond of Albas bequeathed the Douzens Temple all the possessions in his villa, plus a field, half a

Outside their own territories, the Templars bought and developed properties in close proximity to one another, creating fortified city quarters

Roles and responsibilities

Ups and downs of serving

Atop the Knights Templar was the grand master - the head of the order, leading from the front lines. He was followed by a handful of masters, responsible for various territories. Regional and local preceptors, who ran provinces, estates and manors, were nominated on a temporary basis by the grand master, and were voted in by the general chapter.

Each preceptory was run by a commander and a chaplain - the latter of whom usually served on a temporary basis. Under their watch, knights filled a variety of practical roles. Larger houses might boast an almoner, responsible for collecting and distributing alms; a chamberlain, who managed building developments and disciplined servants; a seneschal, or house steward; a marshal, supervising requisitions, buildings and stables; and a distributor of clothes and bed linen. Houses with specific business interests might boast a money-changer, a receiver of tolls or a vendor of wines.

Lower-level sergeants tended to carry out the grunt work - tilling the land, working in the kitchen or looking after the pigs. They were aided by a full suite of other household workers, servants and slaves, while serfs worked the surrounding lands. Among the servants were a varied cast of employees, including shepherds, doormen, bakers, brewers, cooks and even a keeper of the foals.

At preceptories, such as Torphichen in Scotland's West Lothian, Templars lived communally, working to enrich the order and help the poor

vineyard, and a third of his olive groves. Donations were usually quite comprehensive; one Lord Otardo not only left his houses and land, but specifically his two mules, 20 pigs and one hauberk, along with a sword, a lance, a shield, a helmet, a saddle, a tent, a carpet, a clay pot, a bed, three feather pillows, a mule's blanket and a chain for prisoners. Elsewhere, some granted the order their serfs, such as the transfer of William Monnier and Arnold, his brother and Willelma, his sister in 1165, in return for 155 solidi melg.

Starting in northern France and Provence, the order very quickly populated Europe's major land routes and ports - crossing to England via the Atlantic Coast and Channel, and through the Alps, to Italy. Usually, several smaller manors, housing just handfuls of Templars, would be scattered around a prolific regional preceptory, which presided over them. At their peak, the Templars maintained a network of 870 castles and preceptories, along with 9,000 manors, each capable of equipping a knight for the Holy Land. This created a vast supply chain; when Thomas Bérard, master between 1256 and 1273, sent a letter to Châteaudun about his troubles with the Mongols and Mamluks, it was forwarded to the Pope and preceptor of Aquitaine within a week.

Cressing Temple, the Templar's first grant of land in England, grew into their most important estate in Essex, and a sizable farming community

After the dissolution of the Caliphate of Cordoba, and subsequent Christian advances, the order also established houses on the River Ebro in Aragon and the River Tagus in Portugal - the other Christian frontline, against the Moors. Such holdings were, hence, more fortified than the rest of Europe. When James I of Aragon captured Mallorca in 1230, he rewarded the Templars for their assistance with land, where they settled Muslims - much to the ire of the Pope, who wished to see them enslaved. In Villastar, the Templars gave land to 30 Saracen settlers, demanding a lengthy list of tithes and offerings, ranging from the first fruits gathered to hens, and simple cash.

In some cities, Templars traded and purchased properties, carving out a fortified quarter, such as in Perpignan, in Aragon. With so much ground to cover, shipping became a crucial part of the order's veritable empire, especially when it came to moving pilgrims and supplies to the Holy Land. In Marseilles, they enjoyed unrestricted rights to carry pilgrims and merchants, until locals, angry about being undercut, limited them to two orders per year.

Eager to establish their own logistical hub, the Templars set up shop in the crucial harbour of Brisindi, dubbed the 'best in the world', as well as Barletta, Trani and Bari. Here, they loaded up ships with pilgrims, oil, wine, grain, horses, armaments, cloth and wheat, bound for Acre - enjoying tax exemption for non-commercial exports to the Holy Land. In Sicily, they maintained a house in Messina - another conduit for Sicilian produce, and a strategic stopping-off point for those travelling from Provence and Catalonia. They grew so quickly, Frederick II had to restrict their operations, for fear the military orders would acquire 'all the kingdom'. While the Templars regularly worked with regular commercial operators - purchasing six Venetian warships in 1293 and chartering a 55-man Genoese ship in 1300 - they also built their own freight carriers at Mediterranean dry docks.

Controversially, they set up a wharf in Ayas, in Cilia - the global centre of the slave trade, bringing back Turkish, Russian, Circassion and Greek captives for use at the preceptories in southern Italy and Aragon. Roger of Flor, a Templar sea-captain, commanded The Falcon, said to be the greatest ship ever built. It was not only used in trade, but allegedly in piracy too, and was later used to rescue women, treasure and important individuals after the fall of Acre.

As the Templars grew into an all-encompassing machine, with tentacles stretched through industries across the world, they were scrutinised for their apparent fixation on worldly gains - which seemed to run contrary to their founding principles. Some felt that their continued commitment to an increasingly unsuccessful perpetual state of war with the Saracens was a façade, fuelled by self-interest. However, without an empire of estates, resources and infrastructure behind it, the order could not have sustained its military exploits in the East. Maintaining a force of 7,000 Brothers, with 300 knights in the Kingdom of Jerusalem alone, buying cities, protecting pilgrims and building castles on the frontier of Christendom would have been impossible without an economic basis. Ultimately, when the Templars were arrested and dissolved, much was made of their holdings, which were thoroughly scrutinised. Eventually, their properties were transferred to the favoured Hospitallers - but not without lining a few French pockets along the way first.

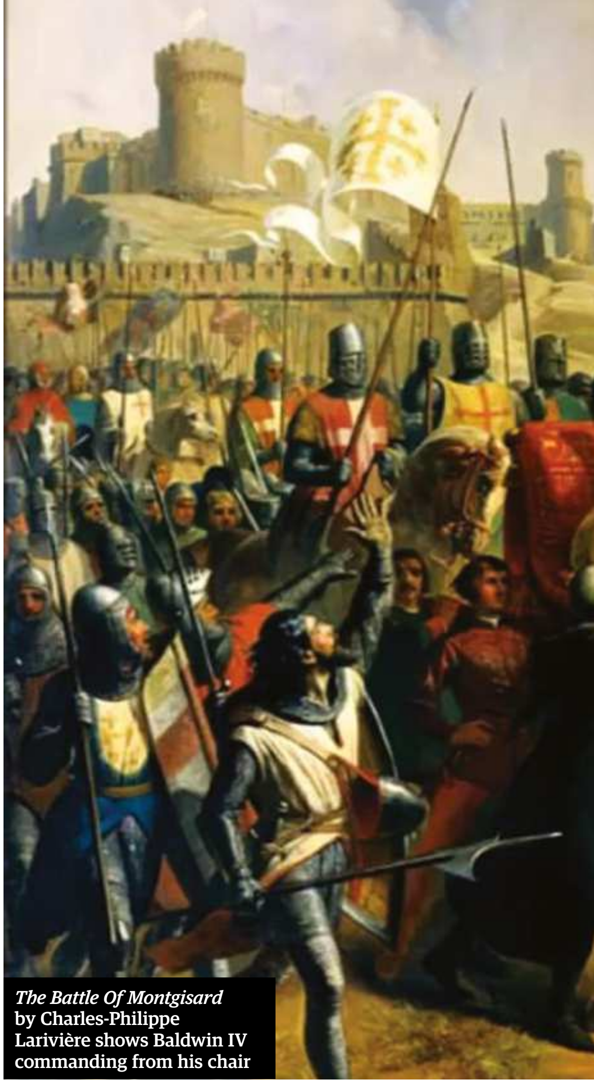
The Templar's reach stretched as far as Ireland, where they built the fortress Castlemartyr in 1210 - later spawning a village

The Templars ran a fleet of ships between Europe and the Holy Land. Their iconography would later adorn Columbus' Santa Maria

Battle of Montgisard

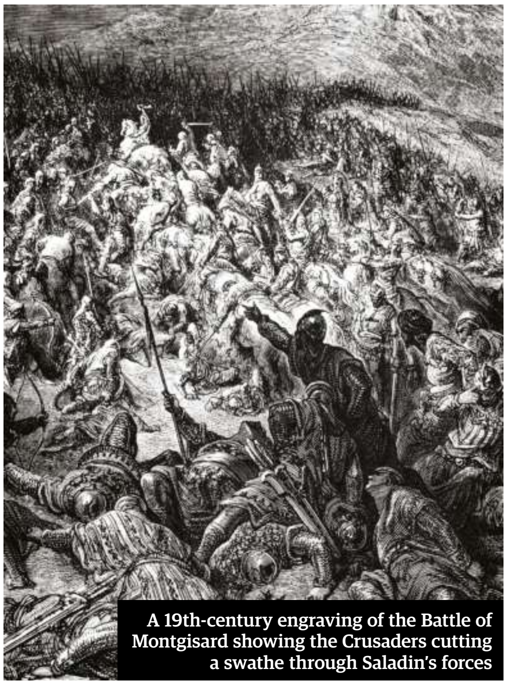
Where? Holy land, central Israel
When? 25 November 1177

Written by Murray Dahm


The Battle Of Montgisard by Charles-Philippe Larivière shows Baldwin IV commanding from his chair

The battle of Montgisard saw the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem unexpectedly defeat the forces of Saladin. The Latins were vastly outnumbered and fought thinking that they faced certain defeat. Their victory put an end to the inexorable advances that the Muslim conqueror Saladin had won.

There are sources from both Christian and Muslim perspectives for the battle. We may even have eyewitnesses in William of Tyre, the King of Jerusalem's biographer, and Arabic sources who interviewed Saladin (Bahā al-Dīn and Imād al-Dīn).


A 19th-century engraving of the Battle of Montgisard showing the Crusaders cutting a swathe through Saladin's forces

The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was always in a precarious position. It was surrounded by Muslim enemies, and lacked resources and support from its Christian allies, in Europe and the Byzantine Empire. The rise of Saladin in Egypt and Syria in the 1170s was a serious threat. Saladin rose to power as a vizier of Fatimid Egypt. He abolished the Fatimid Caliphate in 1171, replacing it with his own Ayyubid dynasty. He campaigned in Syria taking Damascus, Hama and Homs to expand his empire. From his earliest military appointments in Egypt, Saladin had been at war with the Crusader states and the Byzantine Empire.

In 1174, the new King of Jerusalem was 14-year-old Baldwin IV. He had already been diagnosed with leprosy – a crisis in itself. For the first two years of his reign he ruled under a regent, Count Raymond III of Tripoli, but Baldwin proved himself vigorous, capable and courageous. An amphibious invasion of Egypt was planned for 1177. In June, Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos provided galleys to sail from Acre with a force of Crusaders. Troops would be supplied from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Tripoli and the religious orders of the Knights Templar and Hospitaller. The count of Flanders, Philip I, Baldwin's cousin, was also embarking on a crusade to the Holy Land to take part in the expedition. He landed in August and unexpectedly refused to embark for Egypt (or to take the offered Regency of Jerusalem). Instead, Philip decided to accompany Raymond of Tripoli's expedition to attack the Muslim stronghold of Hama (also called Harim) in northern Syria. The Hospitallers, a large number of Templars and 100 knights from Jerusalem went with them.

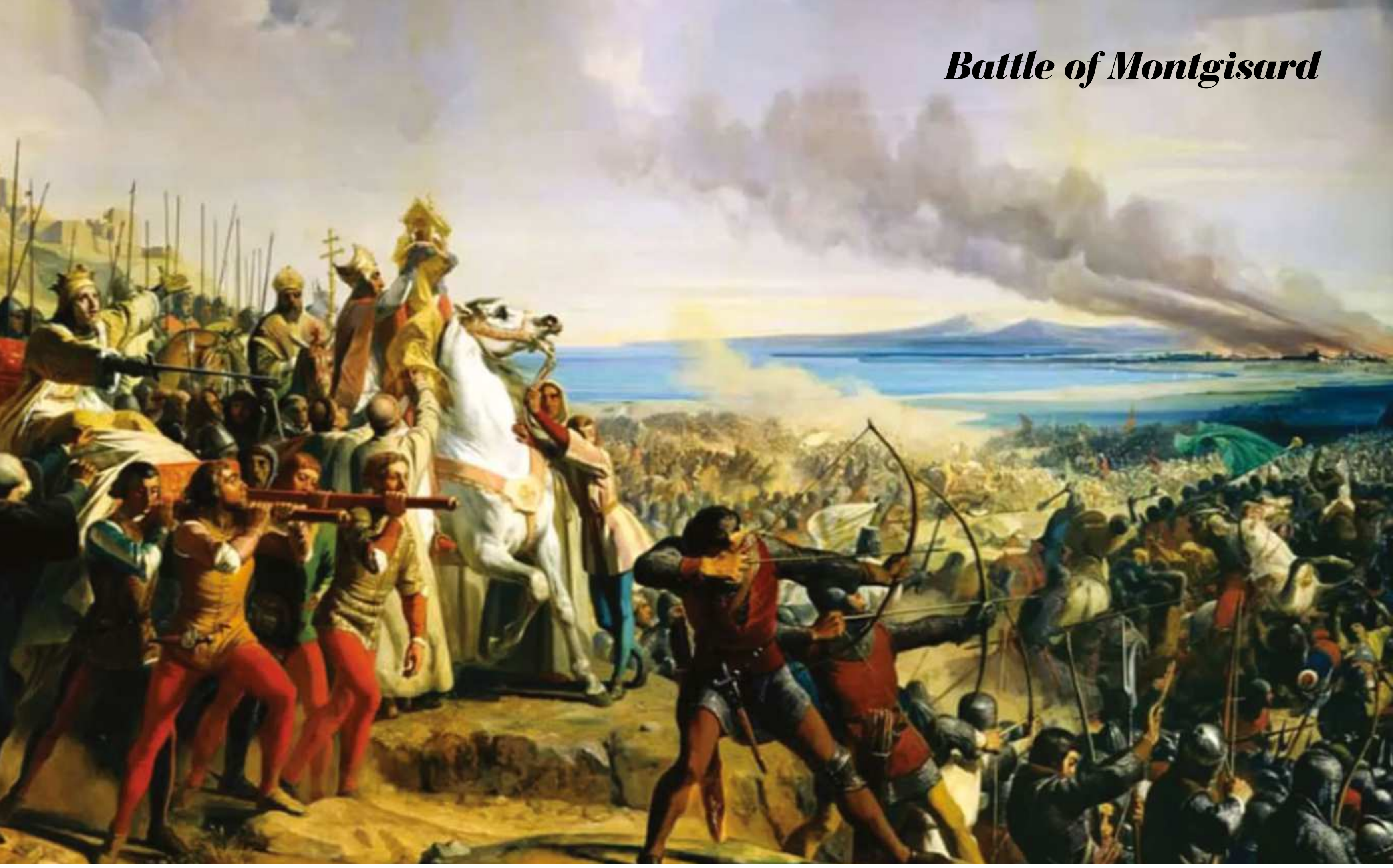
This left the Kingdom of Jerusalem with very few troops to defend its various territories. Saladin was informed of the expedition north and lost no time in organising a raid of his own. William of Tyre, in his *Deeds Done Beyond The Sea* (21.20) tells us that Saladin "assembled troops in great numbers from all sources and caused them to be equipped even better than usual with arms and all manner of things commonly used in warfare. Then with this army he marched out of Egypt."

This vague account is supplemented (21.23) by William telling us he made "careful investigation" (implying he was present) and "found that twenty-six thousand light-armed cavalry, in addition to others mounted on camels and beasts of burden, had entered our territory. Of these, eight thousand belonged to those splendid soldiers called in their own language toassin; the other eighteen thousand were the common knights known as carnagoles."

These were the tawāshī heavy cavalry and qaraghulāmīs (cavalry horse archers). These numbers, however, are suspect and may include servants. Another source claims that there were 12,000 cavalry in Saladin's invasion (another source claims 12,000 cavalry and 9,000 Arabs).

William also tells us that: "A thousand of the most valiant knights acted as a bodyguard to Saladin. All these wore yellow silk over their breastplates, the colour that Saladin himself bore."

Saladin marched to al-Arish, and left his heavy baggage there. His raid was going to be rapid and



he intended to plunder the countryside for what he did not bring with him. Saladin crossed into the Latin kingdom on 18 November and advanced north towards Gaza. Baldwin had learned of Saladin's invasion and "hurriedly mustered the forces still left in the kingdom… their numbers including all ranks and conditions, were barely three hundred and seventy five." William of Tyre (21.22). This is very low but reinforces the idea that Baldwin's army was vastly outnumbered. Estimates for Baldwin's foot troops range from 3,000-4,000.

Saladin bypassed Gaza, but a garrison of all available Templars had been summoned there to dissuade him from attacking it. William of Tyre tells us there were only 80 Templars, revealing how denuded of troops the Kingdom of Jerusalem were.

Saladin advanced on Ascalon, but Baldwin's troops were already there and the king had rushed to the city with his hastily mustered army to reach it before Saladin. Baldwin drew up his forces outside Ascalon. He did not offer battle, but some single combats took place between the two sides. This gave Saladin confidence that Baldwin would not meet him in open battle, so the following day, he sent contingents of his forces out to ravage the countryside. One of Saladin's commanders burned Ramla and surrounded Lydda. Learning of this, Baldwin determined to fight and summoned the Templars from Gaza. William of Tyre (21.22) summarises that Baldwin "immediately directed all his forces, both cavalry and infantry, in all their martial array against him. He was joined by the brethren of the Knights Templars who had remained at Gaza, and together, with ranks in battle formation, they prepared to meet the foe." From there, Baldwin's forces likely shadowed Saladin's march, although other modern historians suggest he marched north and then swung inland to not be detected by Saladin. The army probably marched to Ibelin. Balian of Ibelin was with the army and it made a good staging point. It is also difficult to reconcile the distances and possible locations of the battle with a march from Ascalon.

The following day, scouts from Ibelin located Saladin crossing a valley. Muslim forces had trouble with their baggage crossing a river there, which could have been plunder as the heavy baggage was left behind. The entire army was led out, probably with Raynald leading it into battle.

William of Tyre's account of the deployment of Baldwin's forces does not, at first glance, seem particularly useful (21.22): "they nonetheless drew up their forces in battle array and arranged their lines according to military rules, disposing in proper order those who were to make the first attack and the reserves who were to come to their aid." We can use this account, however, to surmise that he probably deployed them in the standard array of three divisions of 'battles' and that the knights were in front with the infantry behind. Some modern accounts of the battle cannot accept the low numbers provided by William of Tyre and suggest that Baldwin had 500 Knights Templar present, and 500 of his own. William of Tyre (21.22) provides the number of 80 Templars and, since he seems to have been present, his low number is to be preferred. This would have given Baldwin 450 Knights in total – a very small number (but one that accords with the idea that Saladin attacked when Baldwin had been weakened by the number of men sent north). It reinforces how desperate Baldwin's situation was. If we accept the low numbers for the Kingdom of Jerusalem's forces, each battle had 150 knights and 1,000-1,300 infantry.

Saladin was caught by surprise. As Baldwin had not offered battle at Ascalon, he thought he was

Christians battle Saracens under Saladin, from the *Historia* by William of Tyre

JERUSALEM

NUMBER OF TROOPS

APPROX. **3,000-4,000**

NUMBER OF KNIGHTS **375**

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR **80**

KING BALDWIN IV

Baldwin came to the throne of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1174 as a 14 year old. Already afflicted with leprosy, he ruled until 1185.

- + Determined and single minded to preserve the kingdom
- − Afflicted with leprosy and just 16 years old at time of battle

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

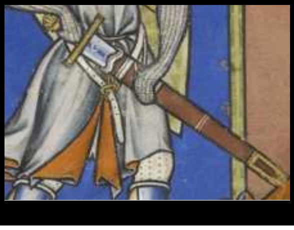
The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, known as the Templars, was a Catholic military order founded in 1119 to protect pilgrims in Jerusalem.

- + Strong and dedicated with ample resources
- − Zealous and overly combative

KNIGHTLY ARMING SWORD

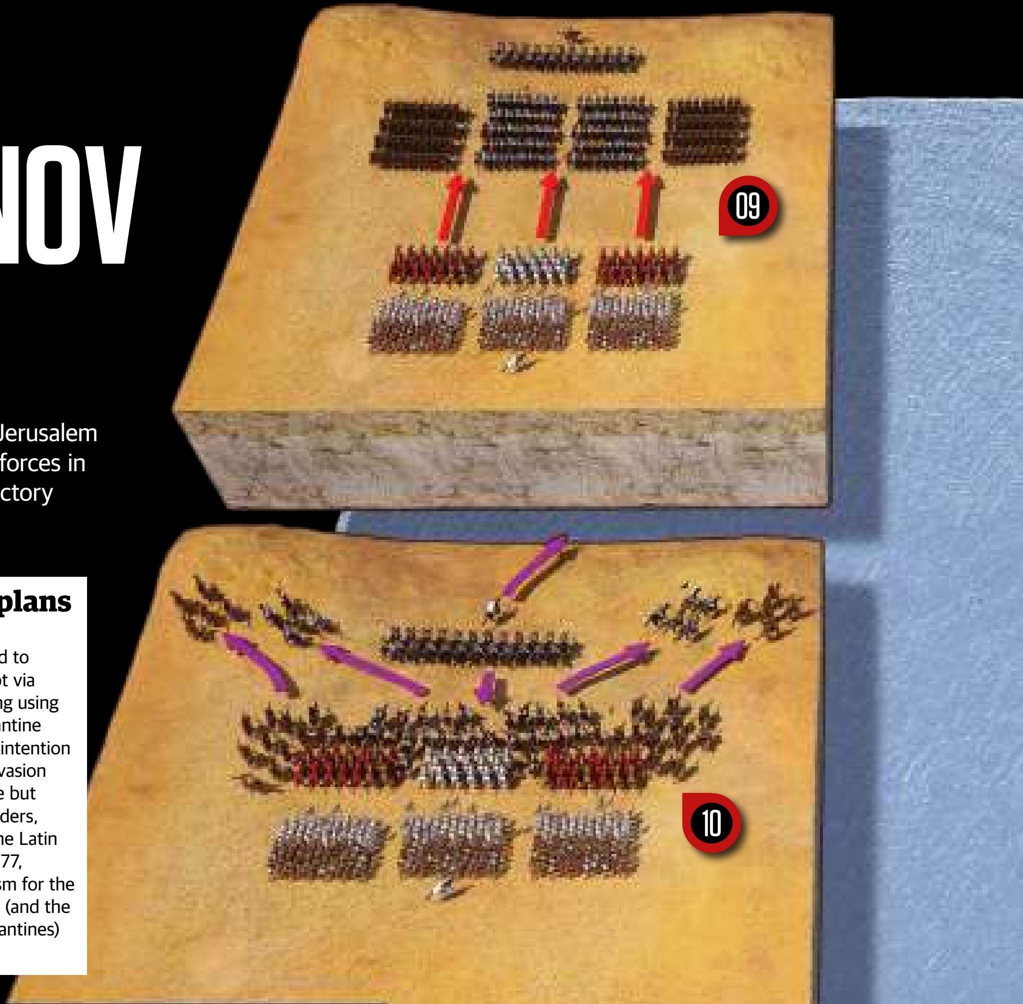
The most typical weapon of the knight in the Crusades a straight, double-edged, single-handed, sword with a cross-shaped hilt.

- + Slender, strong and well balanced
- − One-handed and relatively short (69-81cm)



25 NOV 1177

The Kingdom of Jerusalem defeats Saladin's forces in an unexpected victory



1 Invasion plans thwarted

Baldwin had intended to invade Ayyubid Egypt via an amphibious landing using the ships of the Byzantine emperor's fleet. The intention was to launch this invasion from the port of Acre but Count Philip I of Flanders, who had arrived in the Latin kingdom in August 1177, showed no enthusiasm for the plan and the scheme (and the alliance with the Byzantines) fell apart.

Royal Domain
Lordships
City of the Royal Domain
Knights available to serve King, c1180
Seat of Lordship
Patriarchate
Archbishopric
Bishopric

03

2 The invasion of southern Syria

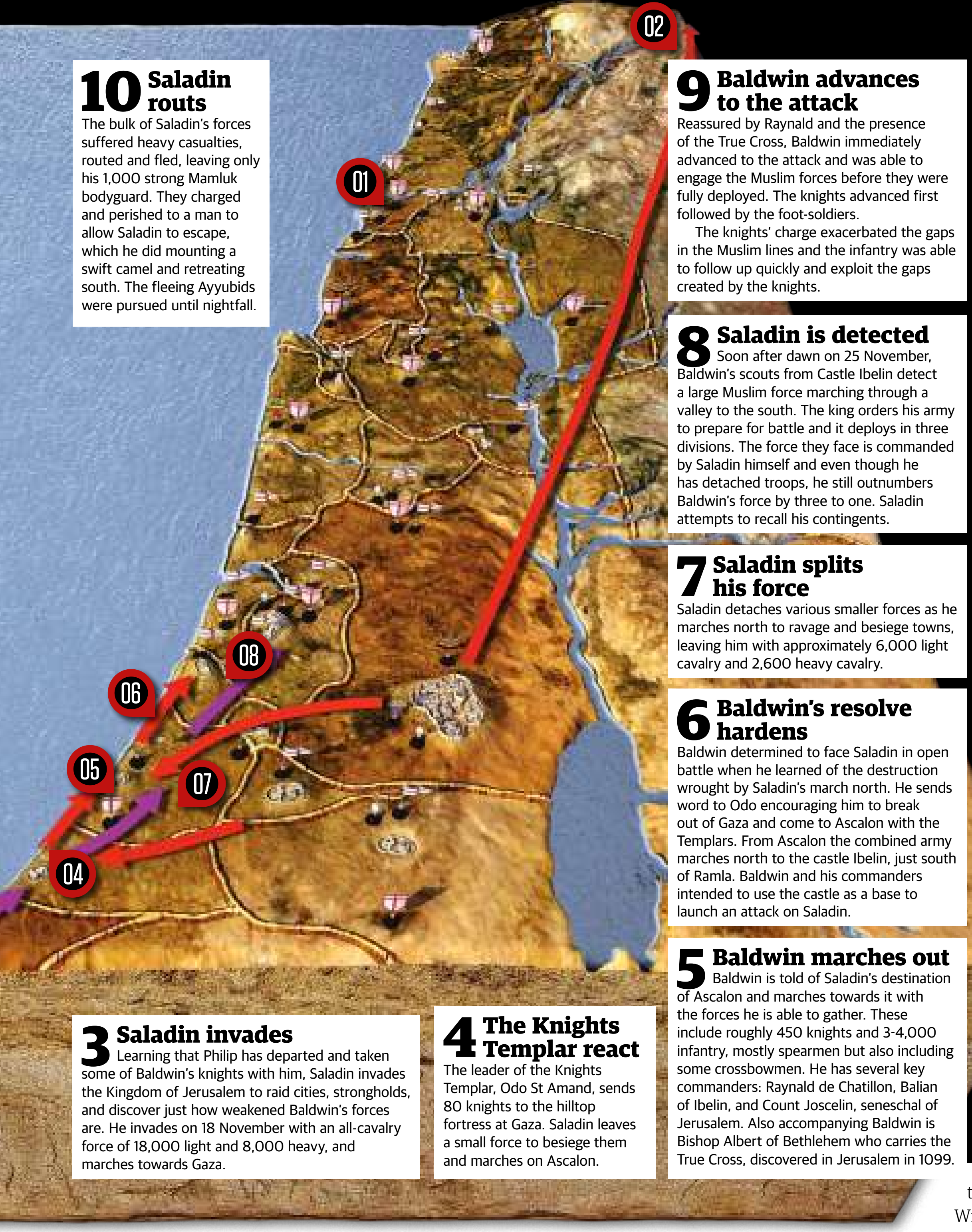
Philip decided that instead of invading Egypt, he would join the campaign of Raymond III of Tripoli, against the fortress of Hama, controlled by Saladin's uncle, in Southern Syria. Baldwin sends 100 knights to support Philip's invasion and was forced to place his plans to invade Ayyubid territory on hold.

safe. He was mistaken. Saladin's men blew trumpets and banged drums attempting to recall the men sent away.

William of Tyre's account of the battle itself is brief (21.23): "The ranks of fighters on both sides now gradually approached each other, and a battle ensued which was at first indecisive, but the forces were very unequal. The Christians, however, strengthened by the grace shed upon them from on high, soon began to press on with ever-increasing boldness; Saladin's lines were broken and, after a terrible slaughter, were forced to flee."

Bahā al-Dīn's *The Rare And Excellent History Of Saladin* also offers us an account of the battle in chapter 53. We are told it was Raynald who commanded the Franks (not Baldwin). This makes more sense since he was the senior commander present, and the leprous Baldwin usually had to be carried by litter and had a lame right arm. It is understandable that Baldwin's biographer would make him the centre of his account.

The Arabic accounts give us more detail of the battle. What is more, Bahā al-Dīn tells us that he learned his information from an interview with Saladin himself. The *History Of Saladin* has: "The Muslims had drawn up for battle and when the enemy approached, some of our men decided that the right wing should cross to the left and the left cross towards the centre, in order that when the battle was joined they might have their backs to the hill known as Ramla Land. While they were occupied in this manoeuvre, the Franks charged them and God decreed their defeat." This tactical error marries with the defeat by the Franks of a superior force but in William all credit is given to their faith. It is possible that this description gives us an idea that Saladin drew up his forces with a hill behind them and with a left and right wing



3 Saladin invades

Learning that Philip has departed and taken some of Baldwin's knights with him, Saladin invades the Kingdom of Jerusalem to raid cities, strongholds, and discover just how weakened Baldwin's forces are. He invades on 18 November with an all-cavalry force of 18,000 light and 8,000 heavy, and marches towards Gaza.

4 The Knights Templar react

The leader of the Knights Templar, Odo St Amand, sends 80 knights to the hilltop fortress at Gaza. Saladin leaves a small force to besiege them and marches on Ascalon.

5 Baldwin marches out

Baldwin is told of Saladin's destination of Ascalon and marches towards it with the forces he is able to gather. These include roughly 450 knights and 3-4,000 infantry, mostly spearmen but also including some crossbowmen. He has several key commanders: Raynald de Chatillon, Balian of Ibelin, and Count Joscelin, seneschal of Jerusalem. Also accompanying Baldwin is Bishop Albert of Bethlehem who carries the True Cross, discovered in Jerusalem in 1099.

6 Baldwin's resolve hardens

Baldwin determined to face Saladin in open battle when he learned of the destruction wrought by Saladin's march north. He sends word to Odo encouraging him to break out of Gaza and come to Ascalon with the Templars. From Ascalon the combined army marches north to the castle Ibelin, just south of Ramla. Baldwin and his commanders intended to use the castle as a base to launch an attack on Saladin.

7 Saladin splits his force

Saladin detaches various smaller forces as he marches north to ravage and besiege towns, leaving him with approximately 6,000 light cavalry and 2,600 heavy cavalry.

8 Saladin is detected

Soon after dawn on 25 November, Baldwin's scouts from Castle Ibelin detect a large Muslim force marching through a valley to the south. The king orders his army to prepare for battle and it deploys in three divisions. The force they face is commanded by Saladin himself and even though he has detached troops, he still outnumbers Baldwin's force by three to one. Saladin attempts to recall his contingents.

9 Baldwin advances to the attack

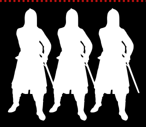
Reassured by Raynald and the presence of the True Cross, Baldwin immediately advanced to the attack and was able to engage the Muslim forces before they were fully deployed. The knights advanced first followed by the foot-soldiers.

The knights' charge exacerbated the gaps in the Muslim lines and the infantry was able to follow up quickly and exploit the gaps created by the knights.

10 Saladin routs

The bulk of Saladin's forces suffered heavy casualties, routed and fled, leaving only his 1,000 strong Mamluk bodyguard. They charged and perished to a man to allow Saladin to escape, which he did mounting a swift camel and retreating south. The fleeing Ayyubids were pursued until nightfall.

AYYUBID DYNASTY

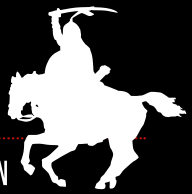


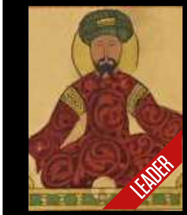
NUMBER OF TROOPS
9,600

HEAVY CAVALRY
2,600

LIGHT CAVALRY
APPROX. **6,000**

MAMLUK BODYGUARDS
1,000





SALADIN

Saladin was a Kurdish Sunni Muslim, sultan of Egypt and the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty who warred against the Crusader states.

+ A brilliant military leader

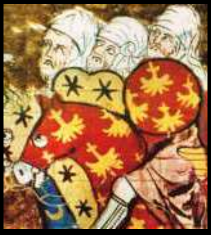
− Ambitious, the sheer number of rival Muslim dynasties meant an almost perpetual state of war

TAWĀSHĪ

The Tawāshī were a body of heavily armed, professional elite cavalry used in Saladin's armies.

+ Heavily armed and armoured they provided a solid core to Saladin's cavalry

− Their relative low numbers meant they could be undermined by other troop-types



SCIMITAR

Swords were just as common in Muslim armies as they were with Crusaders, the curved single-handed shamshir began to be introduced from the 9th century.

+ Light and strong suited to both infantry and cavalry

− Single-edged and not well-suited for thrusting

(perhaps slightly forward of the centre) but when the Frank attack came, they were not yet in their new positions. Muslim tactics to blunt the charge of Frankish knights were usually to give way at the point of the charge and then surround the enemy, but both William of Tyre and the Arabic sources tell us that Saladin's horses were over-tired and had not rested. The usual tactic could not therefore be undertaken and a heavy defeat followed. Having been caught and bested, Saladin's forces broke and fled. His Mamluk bodyguard charged and their sacrifice allowed Saladin to escape, a late source telling us he swapped his horse for a racing camel. We find more information in another Arabic account; Imād al-Dīn's biography of Saladin, *al-Barq al-Shāmī*, tells us of Saladin's nephew, Taqī al-Dīn, in the front lines and we get corroboration of that from other Arabic sources. Taqī al-Dīn's son, Ahmad, died charging the Franks. The defeat was a disaster for Saladin. His forces were pursued for 12 miles according to William, being slaughtered as they fled. Thereafter Saladin's forces made their way back to Egypt piecemeal. They suffered great privations and casualties crossing the Sinai. It is estimated that Saladin lost 90 per cent of his forces. Modern accounts of the battle estimate that the Latins lost 1,100 dead and 750 wounded.

William of Tyre (21.23) however, states that: "At the very beginning of the engagement, we lost four or five knights and some foot soldiers, but the exact number of these is not known." Such a low casualty number accords with a slaughter of a surprised enemy whereas the higher numbers would represent almost 50 per cent casualties for the Latins, not a decisive victory at all. Saladin was humbled and needed to regroup after Montgisard. The Kingdom of Jerusalem had gained a respite, but it was only that.

In 1187 Saladin would invade again and impose a decisive defeat on the kingdom at the Horns of Hattin and followed that up with the capture of Jerusalem itself.

Templar banking

By combining an intricate logistical network with enormous reserves of cash, security and a religious stamp of approval, the Templars created the world's first bank

Written by Hareth Al Bustani

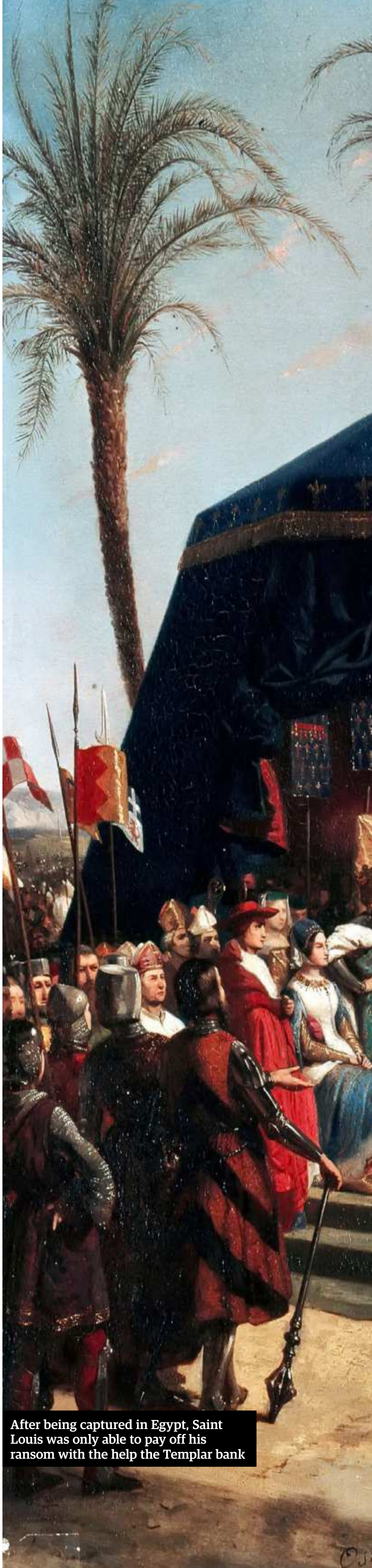
On paper, when the Knights Templar first assembled in 1119, with a commitment to chastity, poverty and obedience, it seemed the odds were stacked against them. However, just ten years later, they were recognised by the Church, and a decade after that, Pope Innocent II issued a bull, *Omne datum optimum*, granting them a lengthy list of privileges - including the right to use spoils taken from Muslims as they saw fit. Crucially, they were not only made exempt from paying tithes - a tenth of produce, paid to the Church - but were allowed to collect them, based on the authority of their parish priests. It was a ringing endorsement for the burgeoning order, and one that would lay the groundwork for untold riches to come.

As the Templars established a presence across Europe via a network of preceptories, their regional patrons offered similar concessions, allowing them as landlords to levy tolls and customs on markets and fairs. In busy provinces like Champagne, where markets ran weekly and fairs could be held up to three times a year, they were able to raise significant taxes on wool, yarn, livestock and hides.

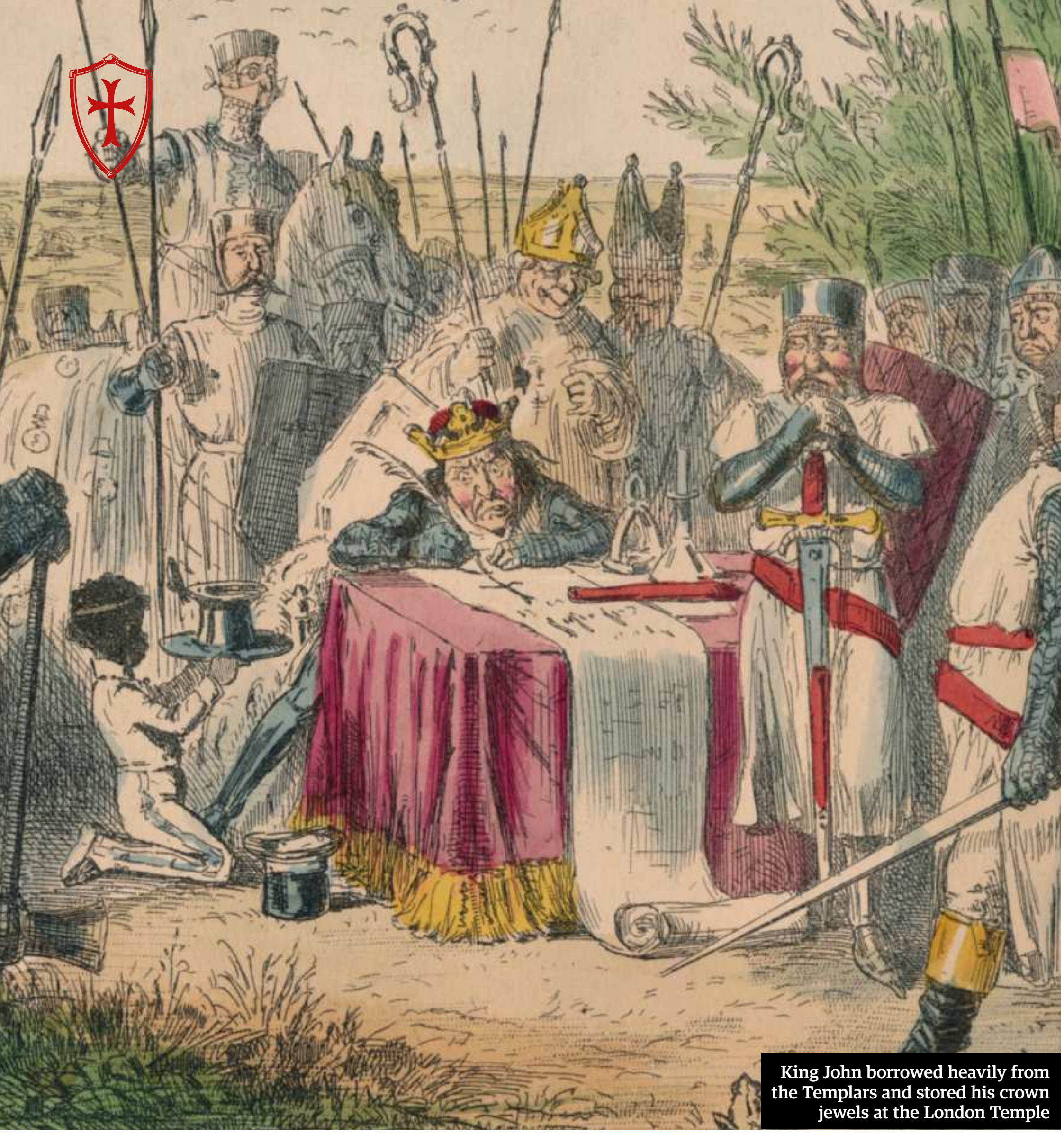
Once a year, a provincial chapter meeting would be held, where money was collected from the preceptories, sent to France and then forwarded onto the crusaders in the East. With exemptions, land and holdings now pouring in, the Templars built a steady stream of cash, and a logistical network for transporting it long distances. This unique pairing soon gave rise to the world's first bank - with the order lending money, storing valuables and transferring funds internationally.

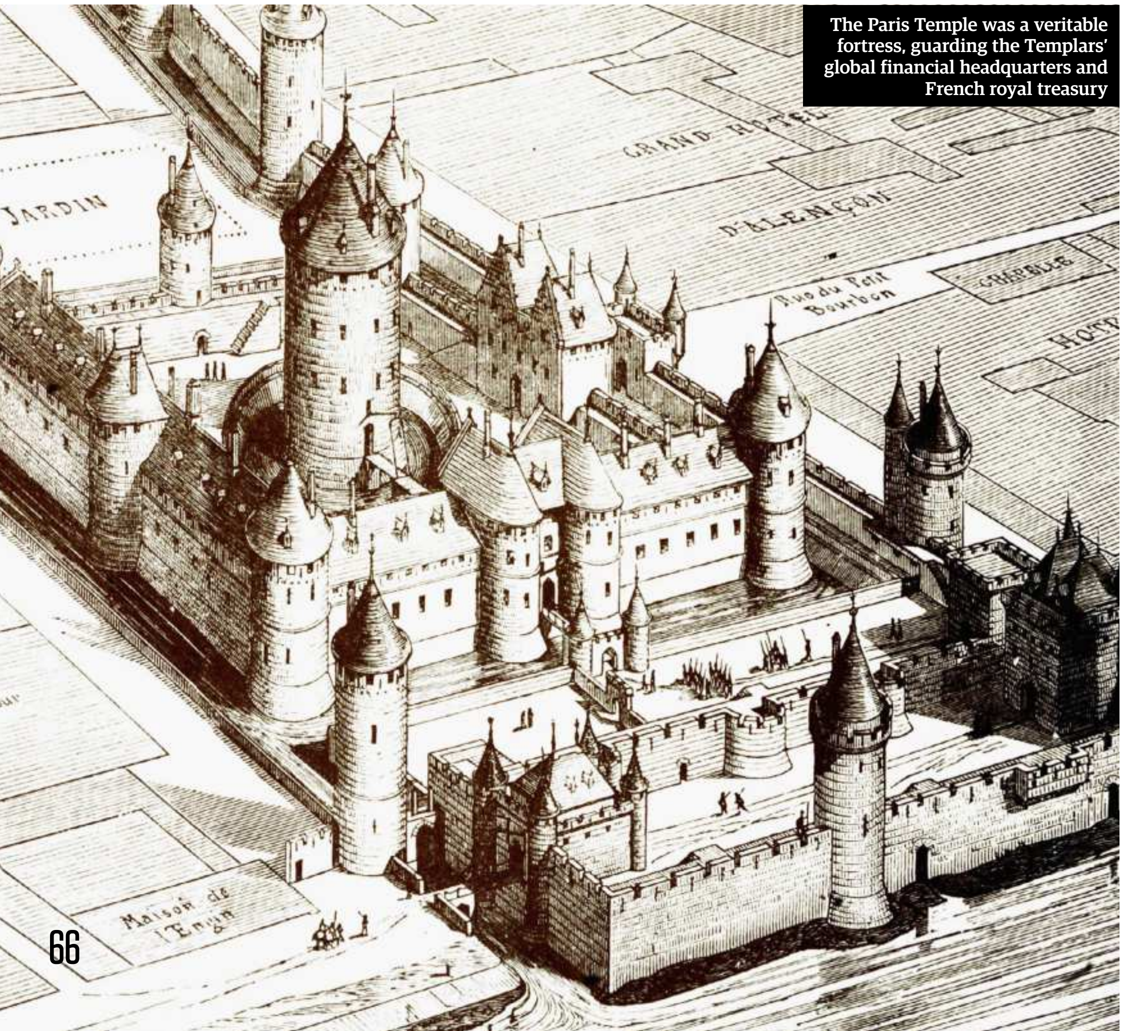
While monasteries had long stored precious items for people, the pilgrimage boom and Crusades created a huge capital drain, and the monks began offering loans. However, with their vast network of preceptories, the Templars were uniquely positioned to provide financial services to pilgrims and knights on the way to the Holy Land. They set up branches on opposite ends of the Mediterranean, with huge complexes in Paris and London. Their financial headquarters, the Paris Temple, was a veritable fortress just outside the city, with a four-storey, 50-metre-tall keep, surrounded by high walls and towers. It was the only site large enough to house Henry III's entourage during his 1254 trip to France.

Before long, financial services became almost as crucial to the order's operations as crusading. Their most popular service was the simple use of Templar houses for storing funds, valuables and precious documents, such as treaties and wills. Customers were handed a receipt, outlining what they had deposited - which, in the case of currency, could be withdrawn from any other preceptory, providing it



After being captured in Egypt, Saint Louis was only able to pay off his ransom with the help the Templar bank


King John borrowed heavily from the Templars and stored his crown jewels at the London Temple


The Paris Temple was a veritable fortress, guarding the Templars' global financial headquarters and French royal treasury

had enough cash on hand. Crusaders and pilgrims, who faced years away from home, and the very real prospect of death, often left behind documents as security for loans, which made their journeys possible in the first place.

Templars would thereafter act as their executors. When Pierre Sarrasin of Paris was preparing to go on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in 1220, he left the order his will, and capital. Should he die, they were to distribute 600 livres parisis to the Abbey of Saint Victor - to hand out bread to the poor on behalf of the souls of him, his family and friends. His mother, meanwhile would receive 100 livres, and the Templars would hand the rest of his estate to his heirs when they came of age.

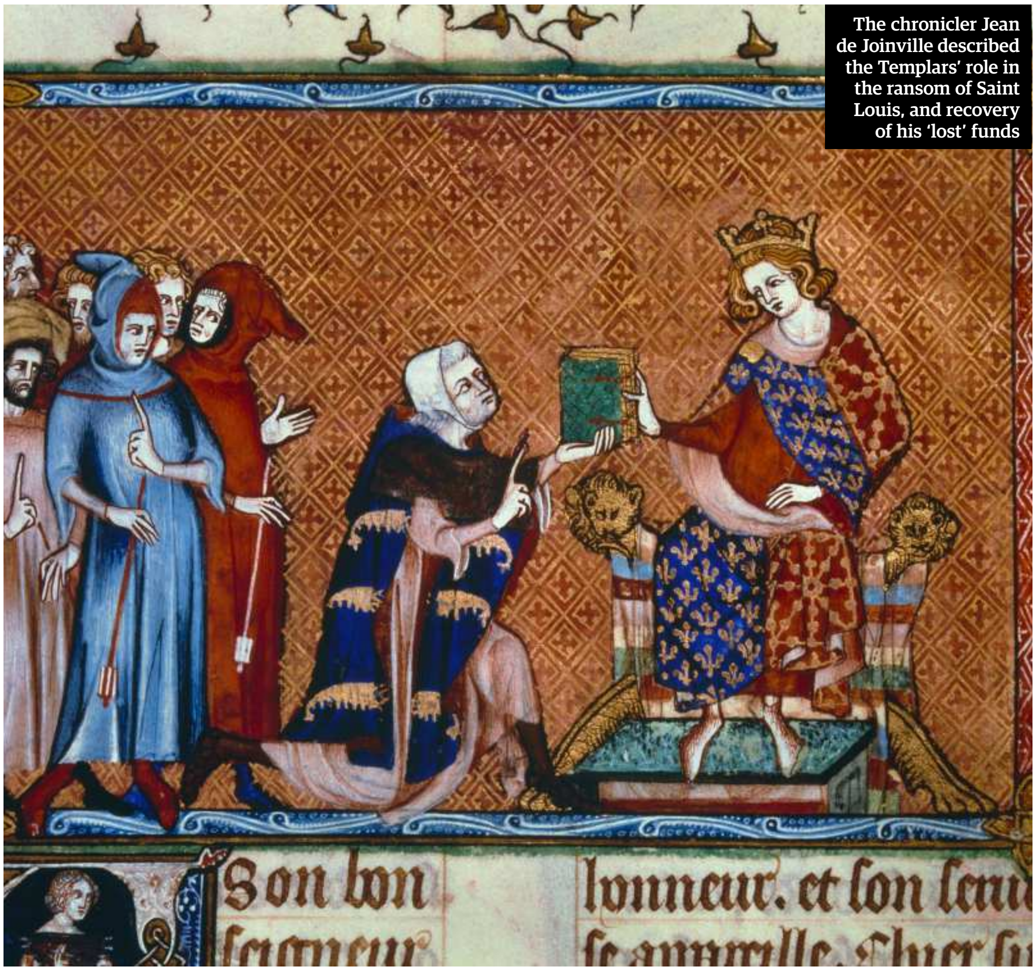
Having initiated the Second Crusade, Louis VII funded his contribution largely by borrowing from the order. His demands were so severe, he almost bankrupted them. This prompted them to shift their policy away from ad hoc arrangements, instead requiring debtors to provide a pledge of security. When Baldwin II, Latin Emperor of Constantinople, sought to borrow "an immense sum of money" from the Templars, they took the priceless True Cross as security - knowing full well the deep financial hole he was in.

During the Seventh Crusade, when Louis IX, or Saint Louis, was captured following an unsanctimonious defeat in the Nile Delta, he had difficulty raising the last 30,000 livres of his ransom. In desperation, Joinville - an esteemed chronicler of Louis IX's court - turned to the Templars, who had money stored on their ships off the Egyptian coast. The master had to refuse - those funds had been deposited by another client, and they had sworn not to allow anyone else to access them. However, acutely aware of the dire circumstances, the marshal, Reginald of Vichiers, suggested that should Joinville threaten to take the money by force, his hands would be tied, and they would instead simply replace the funds with the king's deposit in Acre. At this, Joinville boarded a ship, axe in hand, and simply took the cash, with the king's gratitude.

However, not all transactions were related to the Crusade. When the excommunication of King John was lifted in 1213, he had to borrow nine marks of gold to pay for an offering of absolution. Just before the Magna Carta, he borrowed a staggering 1,100 marks, and later borrowed a further 2,000, to pay soldiers from Poitou and Gascony. He also stored his crown jewels at London's New Temple, though his son transferred them to the Paris Temple, using them as security for a loan, to fund the Second Barons' War.

Nor was it only royalty borrowing vast sums of money. In the 1260s, with the Mamluk sultan Baybars wreaking havoc on Crusader armies, the Patriarch of Jerusalem sent the Paris Temple commander a laundry list of requests. He asked him to deposit money at Acre to hire crossbow men, to loan him funds to retain 50 French knights, and to reimburse loans to pay soldiers defending the city.

Although canon law strictly forbade charging interest, the Templars exploited various loopholes



The chronicler Jean de Joinville described the Templars' role in the ransom of Saint Louis, and recovery of his 'lost' funds

- billing for administrative fees and expenses, or playing the currency market. Later, they grew comfortable enough to explicitly charge King Edward I of England 5,333 livres, six sous and eight deniers for 'administration, expenses, and interest'.

After Saint Louis's catastrophic two-year campaign in Egypt, he sailed to Palestine and continued crusading there for four years. Joinville's account of the campaign outlines his experience of the Templar banking system. In the summer of 1250, stationed with the army at Acre, the chronicler was paid 400 livres - of which he retained 40, and deposited the rest with the Templars. However, when he later sent someone to withdraw another 40 livres, the Temple commander denied having any of Joinville's money or even knowing who he was. Joinville confronted the former marshal, Vichiers, now the grand master, who retorted: "Lord of Joinville, I like you very much, but know for certain that if you do not wish to withdraw this demand, I will love you no more, for you wish people to believe that our brothers are thieves." Regardless, within four days, Vichiers returned, laughing that he had found the money, and that the offending commander had quietly been transferred from his post.

Though, indeed, there were some scandals within the Templar financial network, such as a Catalonian Templar forging letters with a false seal, they were few and far between - and dealt with firmly. The Brothers, after all, were not allowed to keep money, gold or silver, or else they would be denied a Christian burial. On the contrary, the order maintained a thoroughly organised system, and meticulous record keeping. One prolific customer, the Queen Mother, Blanche of Castile, received her accounts three times a year, at Candlemas, Ascension and All Saints. Her Candlemas 1243 statement showcases Templar diligence: recording sums carried forward, credits, and debits, along with the origin and destination of each item.

The spectacular financial fortress in Paris had its own payments desk, recording daily activity. Eight of the record-keeping parchments survive, listing 222 entries between 19 March 1295 and 4 July 1296. Each entry lists the name of the Templar on duty, followed by descriptions of various transactions, payment sums, names of depositors and beneficiaries, origins of the funds, and which register the receipts would be recorded in.

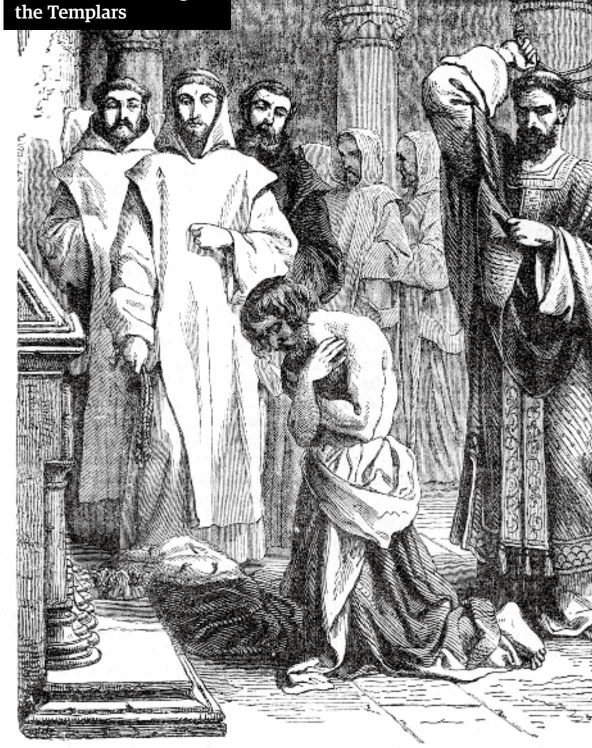
Among the 60 listed accounts were five types of client: Temple officers, ecclesiastical dignitaries, the king, royal family members and nobles. Most of them were represented by agents or officials, who visited the bank on their behalf. The busiest months were November, December and July - when the order received deposits collected around All Saints' Day on 1 November and the Feast of St John the Baptist on 24 June. These were the most common dates scheduled in charters and agrarian surveys for payment. The bank was usually open three to

Medieval currency

Early European coins

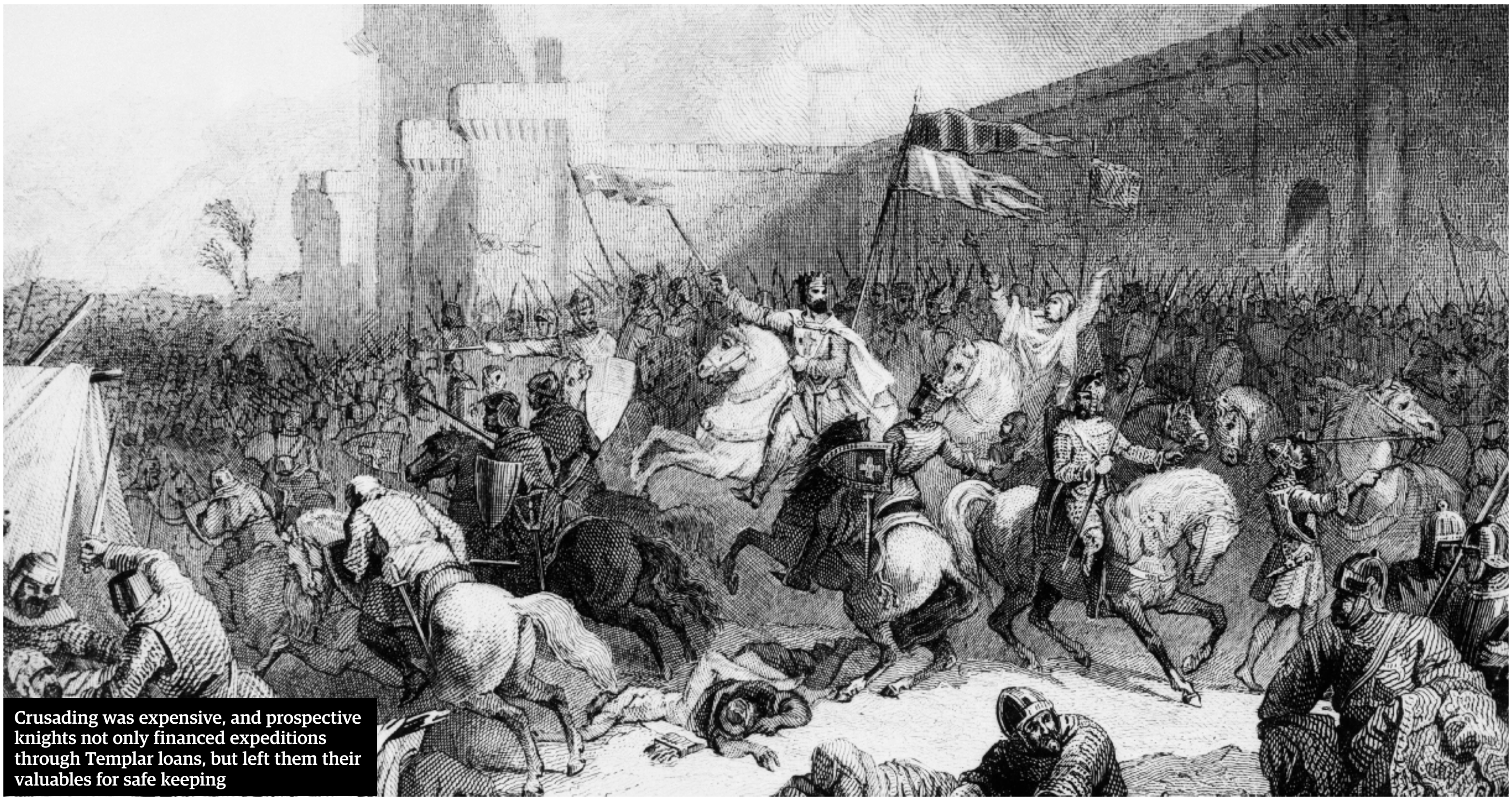
Though some of the Templars' customers paid back their loans with goods in kind, such as livestock or wheat, Medieval transactions generally involved money. Europeans used coinage - usually circular. Minting coins bearing one's likeness was an important step in establishing a new sovereign's legitimacy. It would adorn the centre of one side of the coin, surrounded with a legend, bearing the ruler's name and titles. On the reverse would be a mint signature laid over various imagery - a coat of arms, religious symbolism, or both. The legibility and attractiveness of a design would depend on the skill of the engraver.

Just before the 13th century, most coins were made of silver. They were produced by first melting down ingots and forging them into coins, over a lengthy process of heat treating, hammering, cutting, rolling and blanching. These were traditionally then placed between a pair of hand-held dies, and struck, imprinting them with the obverse and reverse designs. However, this soon made way for mass-production, punching die rather than engraving. European currencies ranged from the French livres to the gold-based Florentine florin and the Venetian ducat. Currencies could lose value through debasement, either by adding copper to the coins or reducing their weight.



After the murder of Thomas Becket, Henry II deposited his funds of atonement through the Templars

Henry II. doing Penance at the Tomb of Thomas à Becket.



Crusading was expensive, and prospective knights not only financed expeditions through Templar loans, but left them their valuables for safe keeping

five days a week, but could stay open as long as 11 consecutive days, during particularly busy spells.

As the European economy continued to grow, so too did the cost of sovereignty. The Templars found themselves at the heart of the continent's financial system, delivering services on an unprecedented scale. Beyond their basic operations, the kings of France, their families and the papacy soon began to leverage the Templars' financial expertise. Having accrued huge debts during his Second Crusade, Louis VII made his repayments through the Paris Temple - initiating a partnership that would last until the order's 14th-century demise. Philip II also paid his pre-Crusade receipts through the Paris Temple, who began producing Capetian budgets three times a year. Over the course of his reign, from 1180 to 1223, Templar-assisted restructuring of his finances helped raise annual revenues by 120 per cent. The treasurer, Brother Haimard, was one of the king's closest advisors - managing the exchequer in Normandy, and even acting as executor for the king and queen's wills in 1222.

Going forward, Templar treasurers would also advise other members of the family, notably Charles of Anjou, who became king of Sicily in 1266. After purchasing a claim to the throne of Jerusalem in 1277, he paid 4,000 livres tournois to Maria of Antioch, paid in annual instalments from the Templars in Paris. Queen Mother Blanche, meanwhile, let the Templars administer her demesne finances, and distribute some 24,500 livres for the construction of her monastery of Maubuisson, where she was later buried.

The pope, too, leveraged the Templar's banking knowhow. Templar administration and loans helped to keep Pope Alexander III afloat, during a deeply divisive papal schism. In 1198, having introduced proportional taxes on the clergy to fund a Crusade, Pope Innocent III had the Templars collect funds, and transport them to the East. When his successor, Honorius III kicked off the Fifth Crusade, he tasked Templars with transferring taxes and redemptions from crusading vows from the European papal legates to Egypt. He was keen to decentralise the process, to avoid claims of papal corruption.

In 1281, the order received huge sums of money via tithes levied on French Cistercian houses and

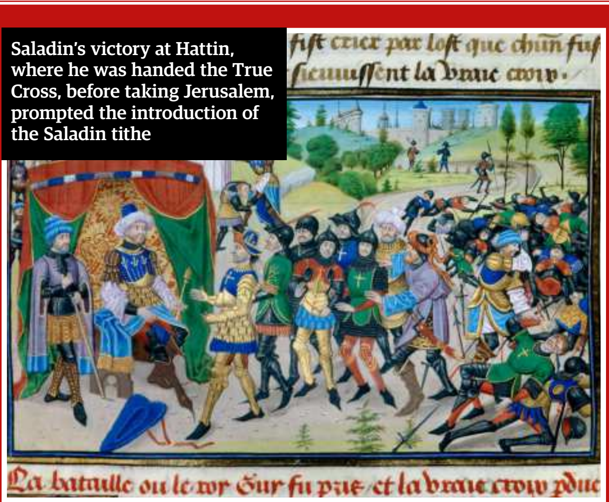
Medieval taxes

From Peter's Pence to feudal fees

In Medieval Europe, landlords had to pay a tenth of their income to the Church - a tax known as the tithe. These funds would be paid to the local parish for the purpose of sustaining the clergy, church maintenance, almsgiving and other costs associated with running the parish. Pope Innocent III also introduced the Papal Tenth - a proportional income tax, requiring all clergy to contribute to the Crusades. On top of that, there was Peter's Pence, a tax compelling all landowners to send a penny to the papal treasury in Rome every year.

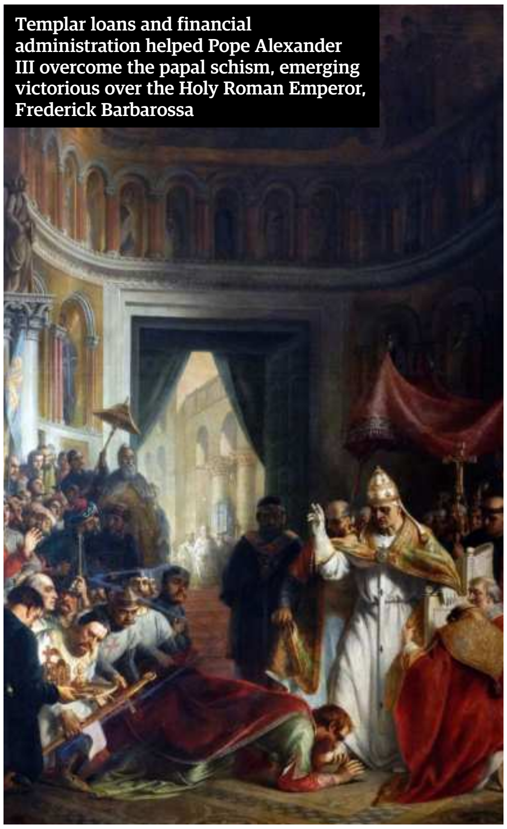
Aside from Church taxes, each country had its own lengthy list of relevant dues. After the catastrophic Battle of Hattin and subsequent Muslim capture of Jerusalem, Henry II introduced the Saladin tithe - charging 10 per cent on rent and movable goods, where only the clergy and knights intending to crusade were exempt. Each country also charged a variety of secular taxes, such as tolls on trading transactions; the geld, a property or land tax; scutage, a feudal fee paid to one's lord in lieu of military service; or customs duties on imported and exported goods.

Being exempt from this long list of tithes, taxes and other fees gave the Templars a unique advantage: they enjoyed collecting taxes from the people rather than paying them themselves.



Saladin's victory at Hattin, where he was handed the True Cross, before taking Jerusalem, prompted the introduction of the Saladin tithe

fiſt crier par loſt que chun fuſ
ſieuuiſſent la vraie croix.
La bataille ou le roy Guy fu pris et la vraie croix pdue



Templar loans and financial administration helped Pope Alexander III overcome the papal schism, emerging victorious over the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa

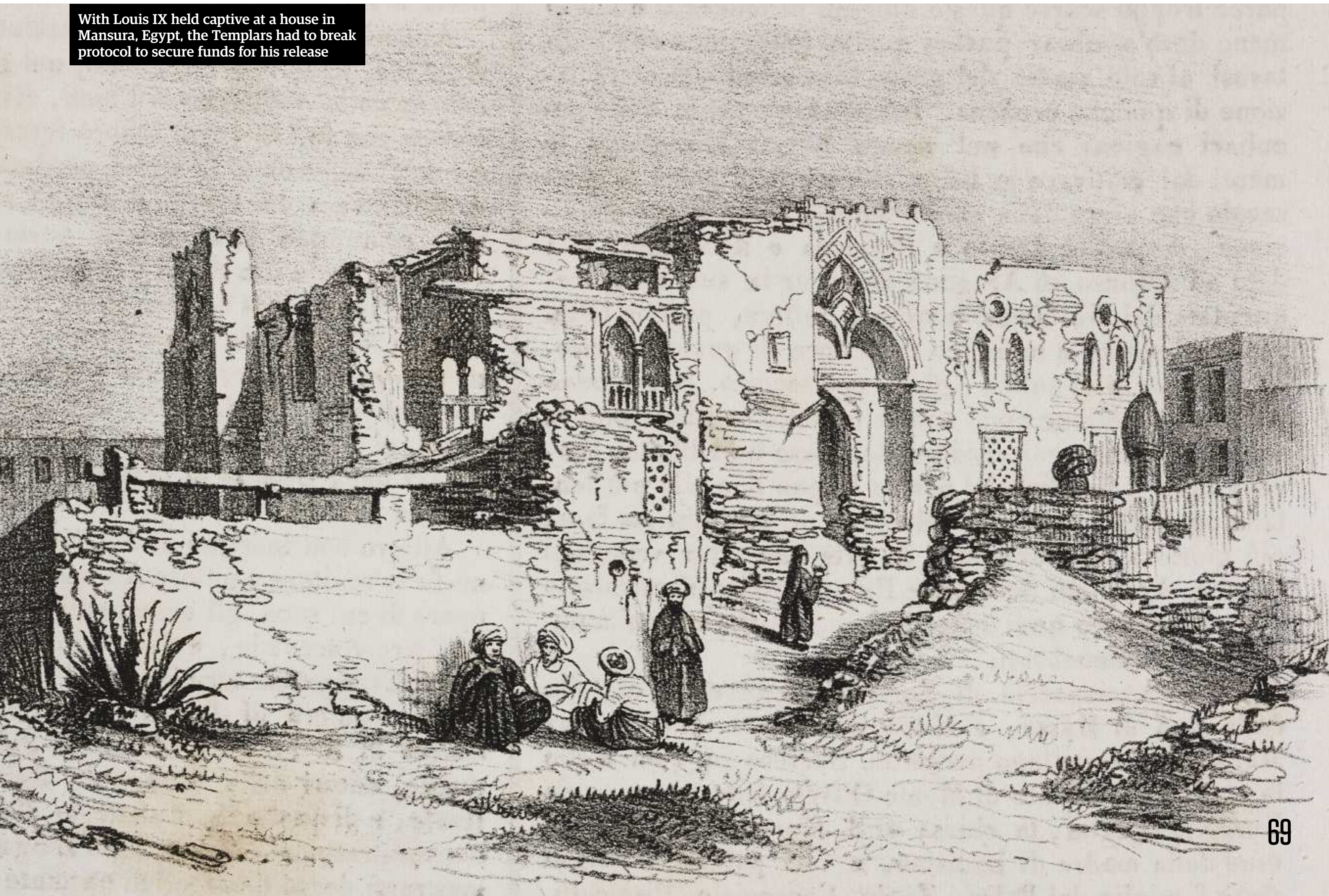
redemption for those who went back on their crusading vows, plus 100,000 livres tournois for King Philip III's proposed Crusade. Pope Martin IV instead borrowed some of this capital to finance his reply to a rebellion in Romagna, eventually borrowing 155,000 livres tournois.

The Templar bank was governed by its commitment to Christian values. When King Henry II deposited funds, in atonement of the murder of Thomas Becket, they were repurposed by Gerard of Ridefort to raise troops prior to the Battle of Hattin. The next year, Henry permitted them to collect the Saladin tithe across England.

With the exception of the Paris Temple, most Templar preceptories were not well fortified. The temptation to raid preceptories must have been high, but most rulers recognised that they may one day find themselves in dire need of the order's services. However, for a few, the urge was too strong. During his conflict with the Barons under Simon de Montfort, Prince Edward stormed the London Temple treasury and broke in to the strongboxes. He stole £10,000, belonging to barons and merchants. His son, Edward II, also broke in to the Temple in 1307, making off with money, jewels and precious gems worth £50,000.

In a slightly different yet similarly controversial incident in 1285, Peter III of Aragon invaded Roussillon, held by his brother, the king of Mallorca. He suspected his sibling was secretly collaborating with the French to invade his domain. At Perpignan, he stormed the local Templar preceptory and discovered not only his brother's treasure, but incriminating documents showing that Philip III had promised him the Kingdom of Valencia, once Peter was overthrown.

Though the Templars were able to rebound from such indiscretions, there was one great raid that they would not return from: that of French king Philip IV. Saddled with deep debt, incurred by his father's unsuccessful Crusades, he was slowly sinking beneath the weight of further wars with England and Flanders, and an ever-debasing currency. The order had even lent him 500,000 livres for his sister's dowry. When he came down upon the Templars, as he had previously the Lombards and the Jews, he came down harder than ever. He strong-armed the Pope into ordering all Christian monarchs to seize all Templar assets and, though these would be transferred to the Hospitallers, everyone plundered what they could first. Many suspected Philip's true motivation was simply to absorb the Templars' cash, assets and financial machinations. For his sins, he made an appearance in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, as the 'new Pilate', who "flaunts his plundering sails into the Temple."



With Louis IX held captive at a house in Mansura, Egypt, the Templars had to break protocol to secure funds for his release

Saladin's battle for Jerusalem

Battle-hardened after two decades of warfare in the Near East, the Kurdish-born Ayyubid sultan led a mighty army to total victory against the Franks in 1187

Written by William E Welsh

On the south knoll of the Horns of Hattin, the Crusader king reformed his surviving knights for a final charge. Arrows that blackened the sky rained down from Muslim archers, the wails of wounded and dying pierced the air, and Christian foot soldiers tried desperately to keep the Muslims at bay.

The Crusaders swept down from the high ground. Their objective was Saladin's yellow banner, protected by hundreds of heavily armed soldiers. The Latin knights crashed into the tightly packed Muslim ranks, which formed a protective barrier around the Ayyubid sultan. Lances shattered on impact, and the knights fought on with swords and axes. They swung and slashed as they fought their way towards the sultan's position. If his banner fell, they might still win the day. It was 4 July 1187. The final phase of the Battle of Hattin was under way.

Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, known to the Franks as Saladin, was 49 years old by the time of the titanic clash in northern Palestine. His rise to power had begun in 1164 when Nur ad-Din, the Zengid Turkish ruler of Syria, sent the young officer on a military expedition with his uncle, Kurdish warlord Shirkuh, to Fatimid Egypt. Shirkuh's objective was to prevent the weak Shiite caliphate in Cairo from falling to the Franks. Over the course of the next five years, Shirkuh and Saladin conducted three separate expeditions to Egypt. During the last expedition in January 1169, Shirkuh became the Fatimid caliph al-Adid's vizier, or chief minister.

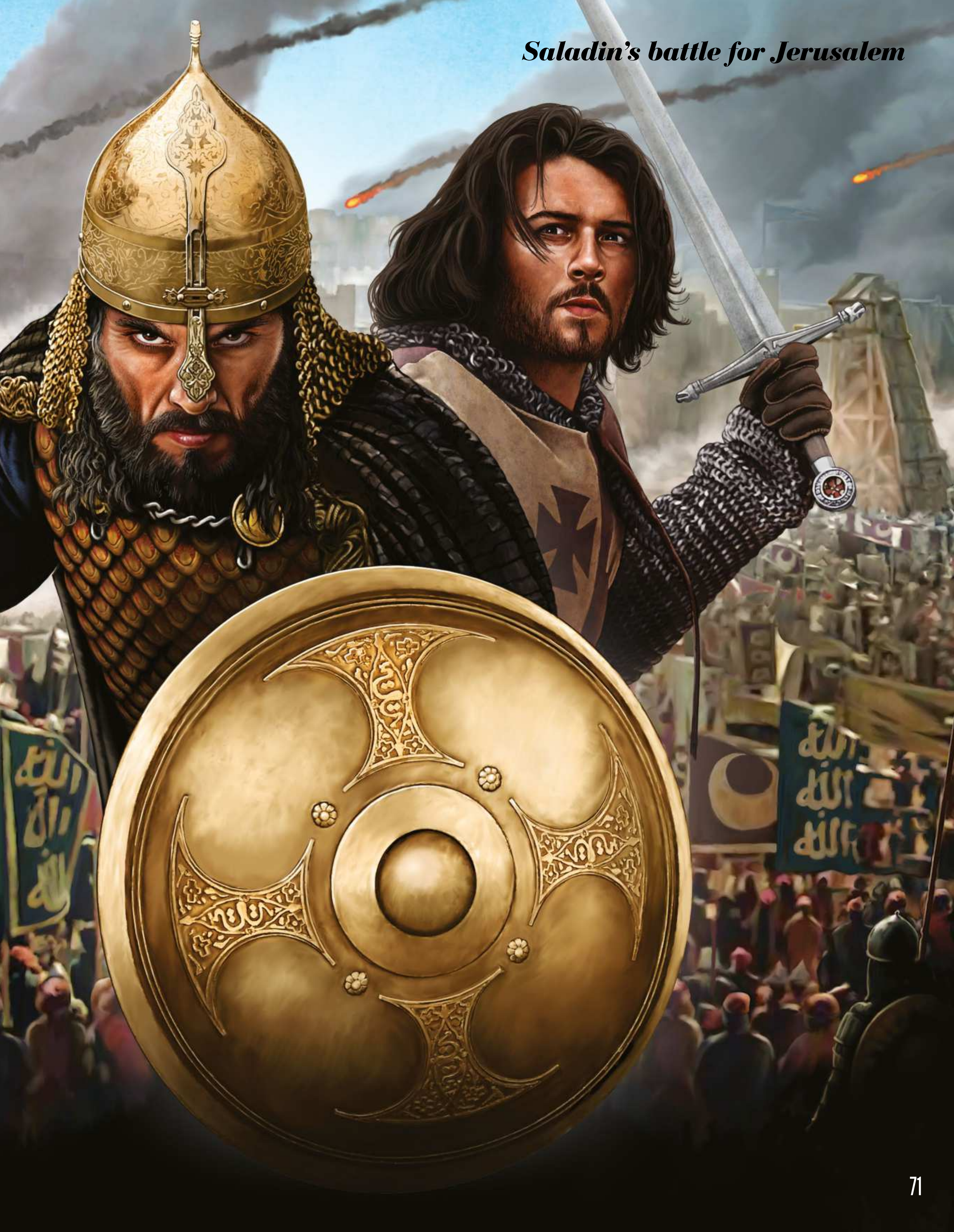
Opportunities always seemed to present themselves to Saladin, but often a sixth sense was required to know how to navigate treacherous palace politics where anyone might be assassinated by the henchmen of an even more clever foe. When Shirkuh died two months after becoming vizier, Saladin succeeded his uncle in the key post. This gave him a power base, and he moved rapidly to bring the rest of his family to Egypt and hand out fiefs to them.

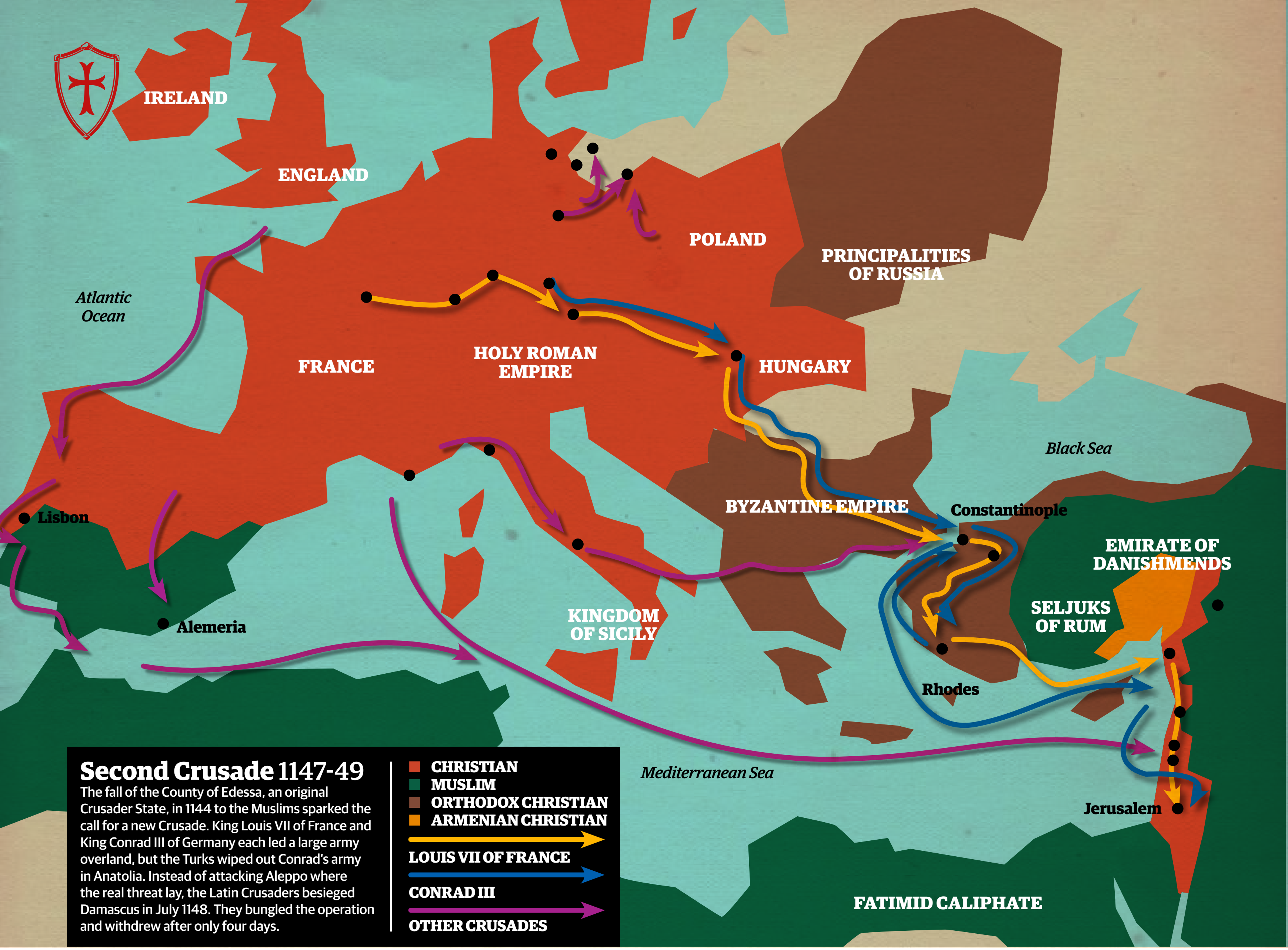
Saladin continued climbing the rungs of the Islamic leadership ladder. When al-Adid passed away in late summer 1171, Saladin, with ad-Din's blessing, became caliph of Egypt. Ad-Din approved of Saladin's ascension to the high post because it would enable Saladin to replace Egypt's Fatimid Shiite government with a Sunni administration. Perhaps the greatest opportunity of Saladin's life unfolded three years later when ad-Din died. Although ad-Din's 11-year-old son succeeded him, Saladin successfully extended his power into Syria.

But eradicating rival Zengid princes in Syria proved a protracted matter for Saladin. Over the course of the next two decades, he walked a tightrope balancing offensives against the Latin Crusader States with those against rival Zengid princes. Although Saladin secured Damascus without bloodshed in 1174, it would be nearly another decade until he could capture Aleppo in 1183. By then he had extended his control over most of Syria, as well as most of Jazira to the east, forging in the process an impressive Ayyubid Empire, which bore his family surname.

The rulers of the rival Seljuk and Ayyubid empires were in constant competition, and both reported to the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad. Throughout the long

Saladin's battle for Jerusalem





Second Crusade 1147-49

The fall of the County of Edessa, an original Crusader State, in 1144 to the Muslims sparked the call for a new Crusade. King Louis VII of France and King Conrad III of Germany each led a large army overland, but the Turks wiped out Conrad's army in Anatolia. Instead of attacking Aleppo where the real threat lay, the Latin Crusaders besieged Damascus in July 1148. They bungled the operation and withdrew after only four days.

years campaigning against the rival Zengid Dynasty, Saladin had to justify to the Abbasid caliph why he saw it necessary to take up the sword against fellow Muslims instead of Christian infidels. Saladin told the caliph he would not be strong enough to defeat the Franks until he had amassed greater power.

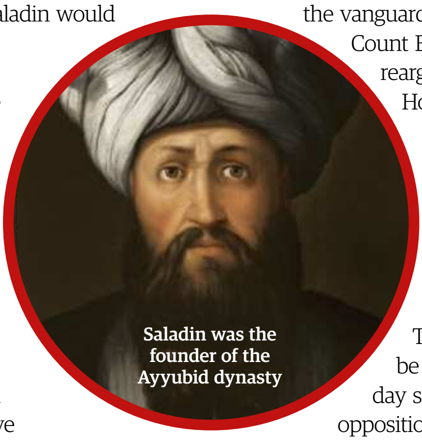
Saladin invaded the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the largest of three Crusader States, in the autumn of 1183. Guy of Lusignan, regent of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, was determined to fight a defensive battle, and Saladin did not find favourable circumstances to attack, so he withdrew. In winter 1186-87, an incident occurred that gave Saladin good cause to re-invade the Latin kingdom. Lord Raynald of Châtillon, a sworn enemy of Saladin, pillaged a Muslim caravan travelling from Cairo to Damascus through his realm.

Saladin had entered into a two-year truce with Raynald in 1186 in which the Frankish baron had agreed to allow caravans to pass unmolested from Egypt to Syria. But Raynald had confiscated the riches and imprisoned the travellers. Saladin requested multiple times that Raynald release the prisoners and their possessions. "The Count persistently refused to comply," wrote contemporary Arab historian Ibn al-Athir. "Saladin vowed if he ever laid hands on him, he would kill him."

In spring 1187, Saladin began assembling a large army in southern Syria. His generals - each of whom would command the equivalent of a modern corps in the upcoming campaign - were his nephew, Al-Muzaffar Taqi al-Din, who would lead the right wing; and Kurdish-born Muzaffar ad-Din Gokbori, who would lead the left wing. Saladin would command the centre.

Saladin had approximately 30,000 men, half of whom were veteran cavalry. The ground where the battle would unfold consisted of rolling hills with expansive plateaus blanketed with grass and bristling with rocky outcroppings. Water could be found in varying amounts at different springs. Saladin intended to block the Crusaders from reaching the Sea of Galilee, where they would have abundant water. He also intended to isolate them, if possible, away from a desert spring.

Saladin led his army across the Jordan River during the last week in June. The Ayyubids encamped at Kafr Sabt, which was ten kilometres south west of Tiberias. The Crusader army mustered at Sephorie, 24 kilometres from Tiberias. King Guy of Jerusalem commanded 20,000 men, of whom 15,000 were infantry, 3,800 were auxiliary cavalry, and 1,200 were mounted knights. The horses were not armoured, and therefore vulnerable to arrows. Prince Raymond III of Tripoli commanded the vanguard, Guy the mainguard, and Count Balian of Ibelin led the rearguard, which included the elite Hospitallers and Templars.

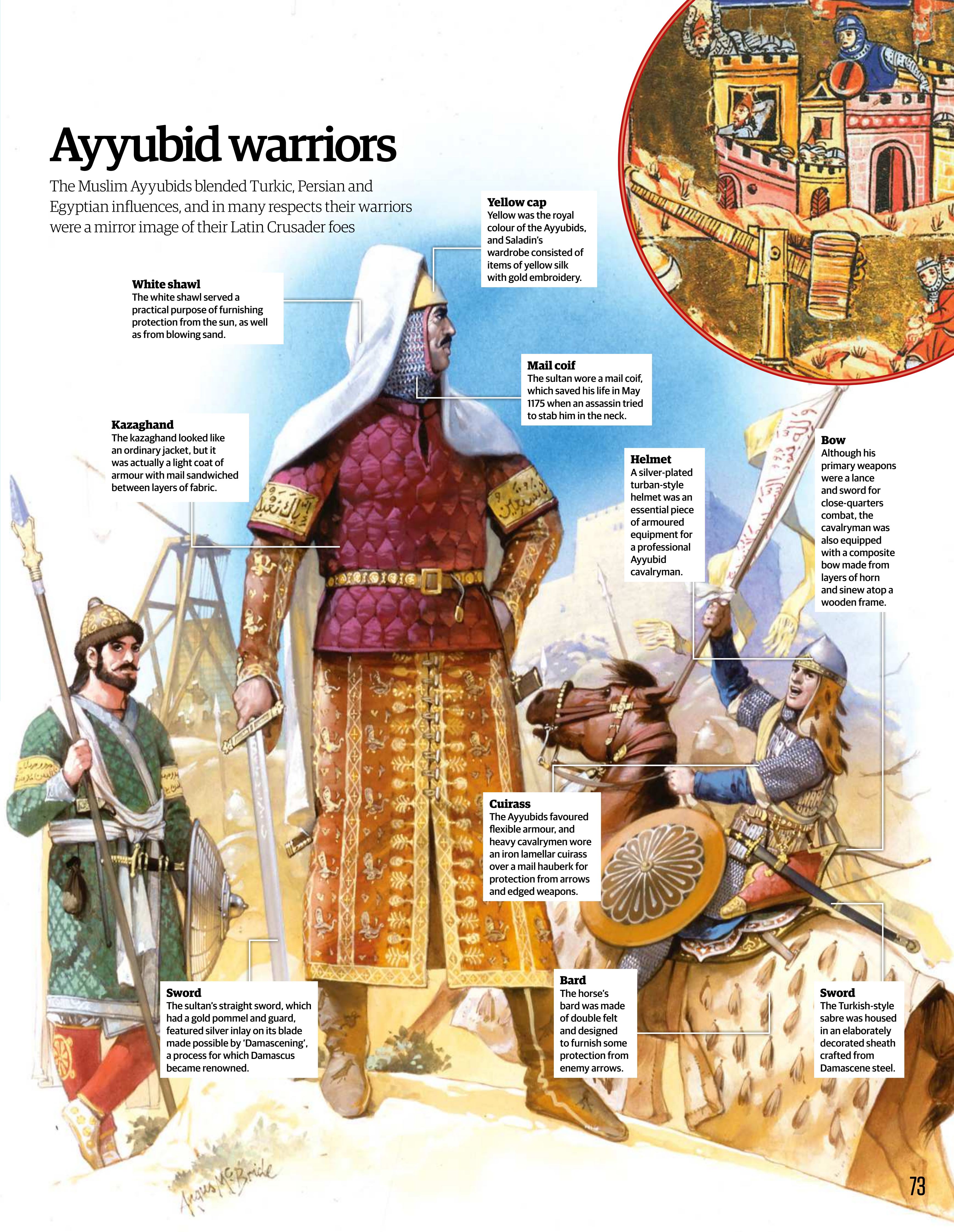

Saladin was the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty

To lure the Crusaders into battle, Saladin personally led a detachment on 2 June to besiege Tiberias. Guy took the bait without gathering reconnaissance on the size or location of the enemy forces. The distance to Tiberius would be too much to cover in one day should they run into serious opposition, but Guy had no idea where they would camp after the first day's march.

The Crusaders left camp at dawn and set off for the spring of Turan, where limited water was available. On the march, foot soldiers in each of the three corps formed a protective square around the mounted knights and sergeants. The Crusaders

Ayyubid warriors

The Muslim Ayyubids blended Turkic, Persian and Egyptian influences, and in many respects their warriors were a mirror image of their Latin Crusader foes



Yellow cap
Yellow was the royal colour of the Ayyubids, and Saladin's wardrobe consisted of items of yellow silk with gold embroidery.

White shawl
The white shawl served a practical purpose of furnishing protection from the sun, as well as from blowing sand.

Mail coif
The sultan wore a mail coif, which saved his life in May 1175 when an assassin tried to stab him in the neck.

Kazaghand
The kazaghand looked like an ordinary jacket, but it was actually a light coat of armour with mail sandwiched between layers of fabric.

Helmet
A silver-plated turban-style helmet was an essential piece of armoured equipment for a professional Ayyubid cavalryman.

Bow
Although his primary weapons were a lance and sword for close-quarters combat, the cavalryman was also equipped with a composite bow made from layers of horn and sinew atop a wooden frame.

Cuirass
The Ayyubids favoured flexible armour, and heavy cavalrymen wore an iron lamellar cuirass over a mail hauberk for protection from arrows and edged weapons.

Sword
The sultan's straight sword, which had a gold pommel and guard, featured silver inlay on its blade made possible by 'Damascening', a process for which Damascus became renowned.

Bard
The horse's bard was made of double felt and designed to furnish some protection from enemy arrows.

Sword
The Turkish-style sabre was housed in an elaborately decorated sheath crafted from Damascene steel.

reached Turan at midday and some troops and horses received water. They had only covered ten kilometres. Guy decided to press on for the village of Hattin, which was situated about eight kilometres to the north east, where ample water was stored.

The Muslims soon appeared in large numbers on both flanks of the Latin army. Saladin's strategy, for the most part, was the same as that practised by the Mongols and Asian steppe warriors. He would encircle the enemy and weaken it with heavy fire from his archers. If the Crusaders charged the archers, they would scatter to avoid contact.

Mounted skirmishers armed with compound bows maintained steady pressure on the Crusader vanguard throughout the first day. The result was that by midday, the Crusader advance slowed to a crawl. Guy sent a messenger to get Raymond's advice. He suggested they camp for the night.

The Crusaders were at a junction called Maskana, which had no water. Nevertheless, Guy took Raymond's advice. He may have hoped the Muslims would attack, in which case the Franks would have an advantage on the defensive. But Saladin had no such intentions. The Christians, most of whom were severely dehydrated, slept on their arms.

"The Muslims for their part had lost their first fear of the enemy and were in high spirits, and spent the night inciting one another to battle," wrote al-Athir. "They could smell victory in the air."

The Crusaders renewed their advance at dawn. Muslim archers fired a steady stream of arrows into their ranks. In addition, the Muslim skirmishers repeatedly attacked Raymond's vanguard.

The Latin infantry, which lacked the knights' esprit de corps, became despondent. The foot soldiers began to break formation, which left the knights unprotected. The infantry wandered towards the north of the two hills that formed the Horns of Hattin. Guy begged them to stay in column, but they could not be rallied. The Crusaders' only hope lay in reaching the village of Hattin. But the village was in Muslim hands, and Saladin's troops had no intention of allowing the Christians to reach it.

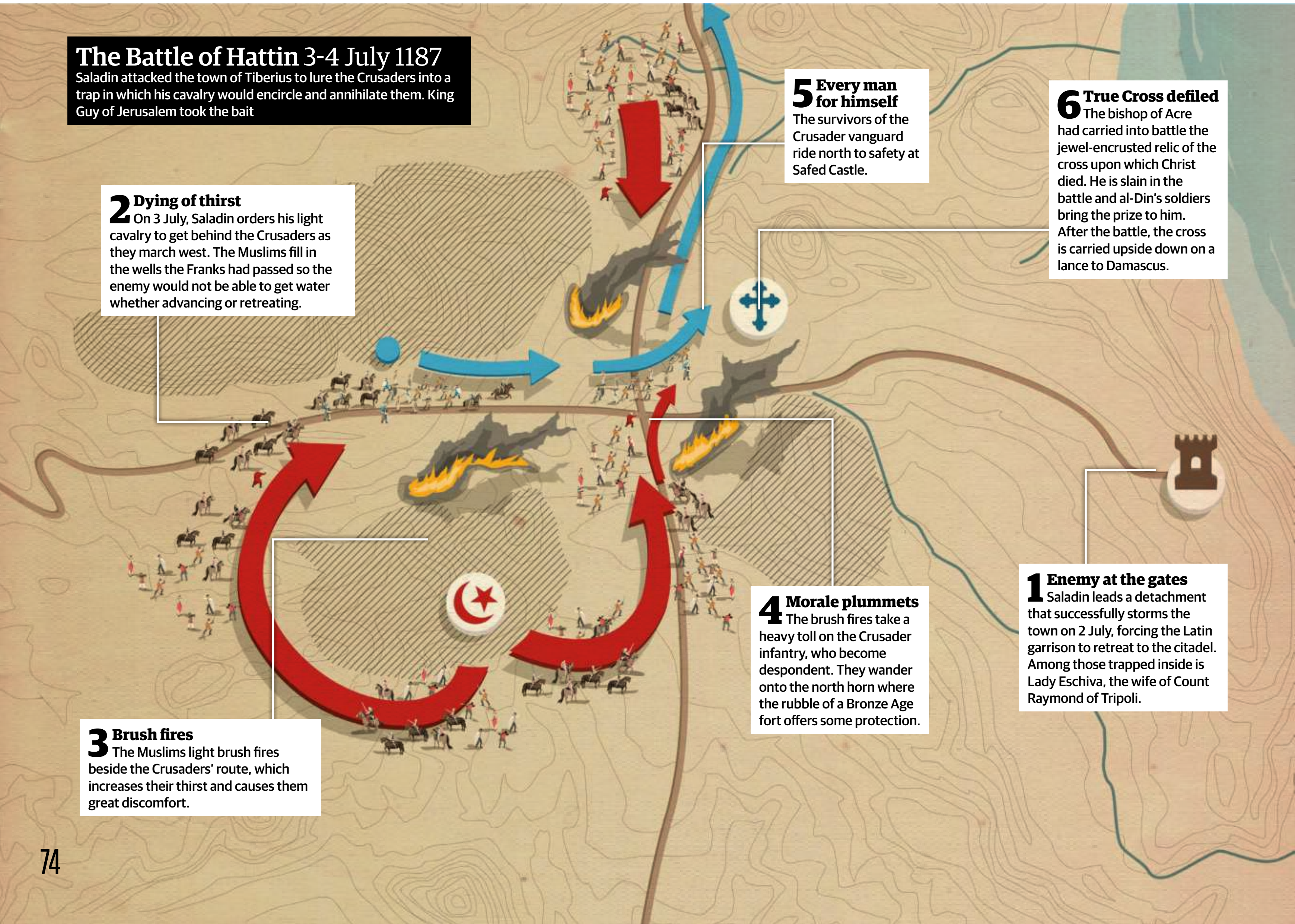
With the situation growing increasingly desperate by mid-morning, Raymond assembled his knights for a headlong charge against Taqi al-Din's troops. The charge was successful and Raymond, Balian and about a dozen knights escaped. Guy was left with his household knights and those from the two military orders.

In a last-ditch effort to rally his troops, Guy instructed his squires to put up his red tent on the lower slope of the south horn. By that time, Muslim infantry was attacking the Crusader foot atop the Horns of Hattin. At mid-afternoon, Guy believed that his only hope lay in charging towards Saladin's position. He led two headlong charges, but Saladin's Mamluk bodyguards drove them back with heavy losses each time.

Guy and his knights took up a defensive position on the southern horn with some of the infantry. Saladin ordered an assault against the horns. Heavy cavalry armed with lances overran the Crusader position; in the process, they captured the morale-boosting relic known as the True Cross. With its loss went any last shred of morale, and Guy ordered his men to cast away their weapons and lie flat on the rocky ground, placing themselves at Saladin's mercy.

The Franks were rounded up and paraded before Saladin. Approximately 200 Knights Templar were summarily executed. Saladin agreed to ransom Guy and the other nobles. The rank and file of the Crusader army were led away to be sold into slavery.

Saladin is said to have called Guy and Raynald of Chatillon into his tent. He gave a goblet filled with



The Battle of Hattin 3-4 July 1187

Saladin attacked the town of Tiberius to lure the Crusaders into a trap in which his cavalry would encircle and annihilate them. King Guy of Jerusalem took the bait

2 Dying of thirst On 3 July, Saladin orders his light cavalry to get behind the Crusaders as they march west. The Muslims fill in the wells the Franks had passed so the enemy would not be able to get water whether advancing or retreating.

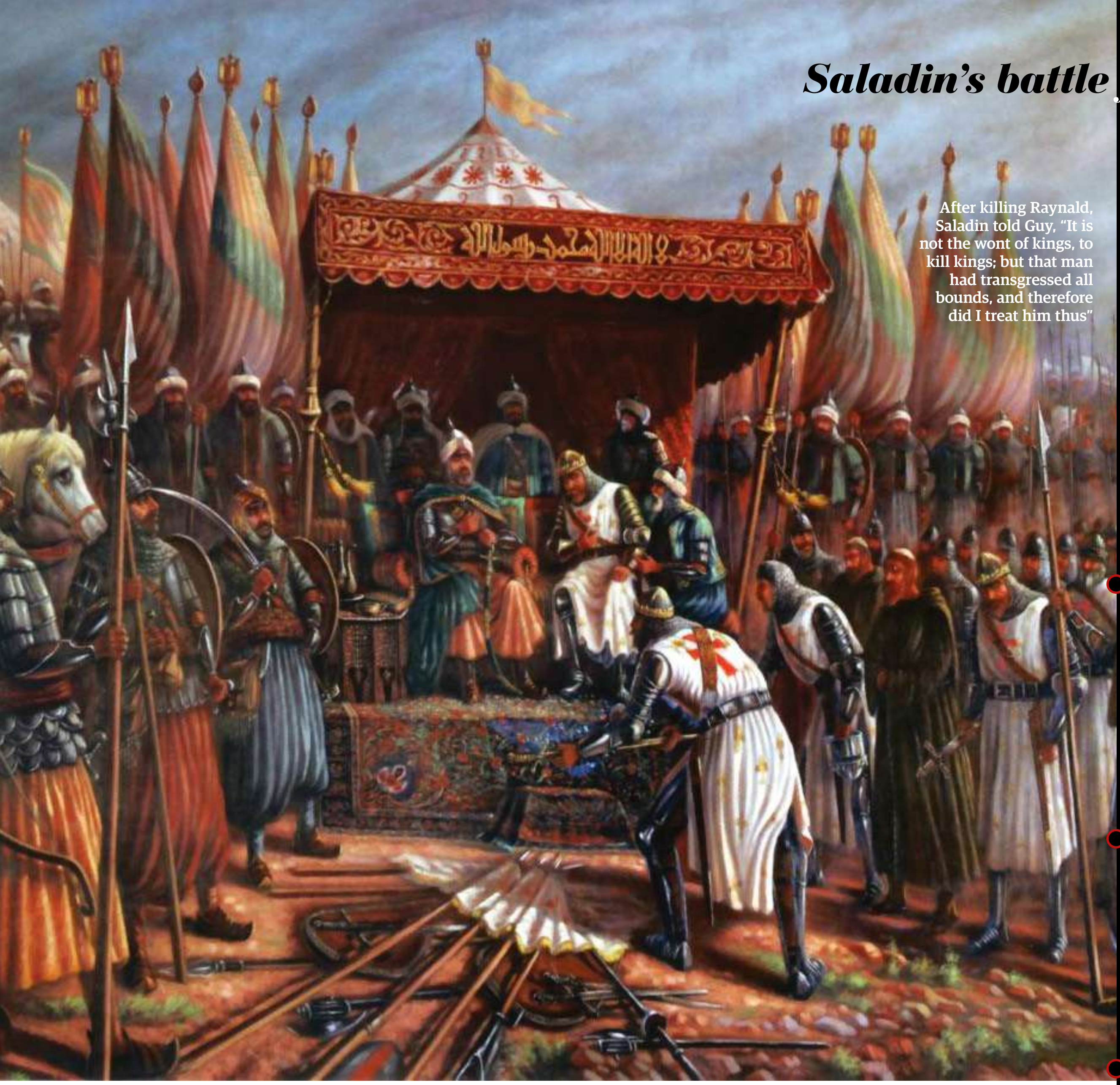
3 Brush fires The Muslims light brush fires beside the Crusaders' route, which increases their thirst and causes them great discomfort.

5 Every man for himself The survivors of the Crusader vanguard ride north to safety at Safed Castle.

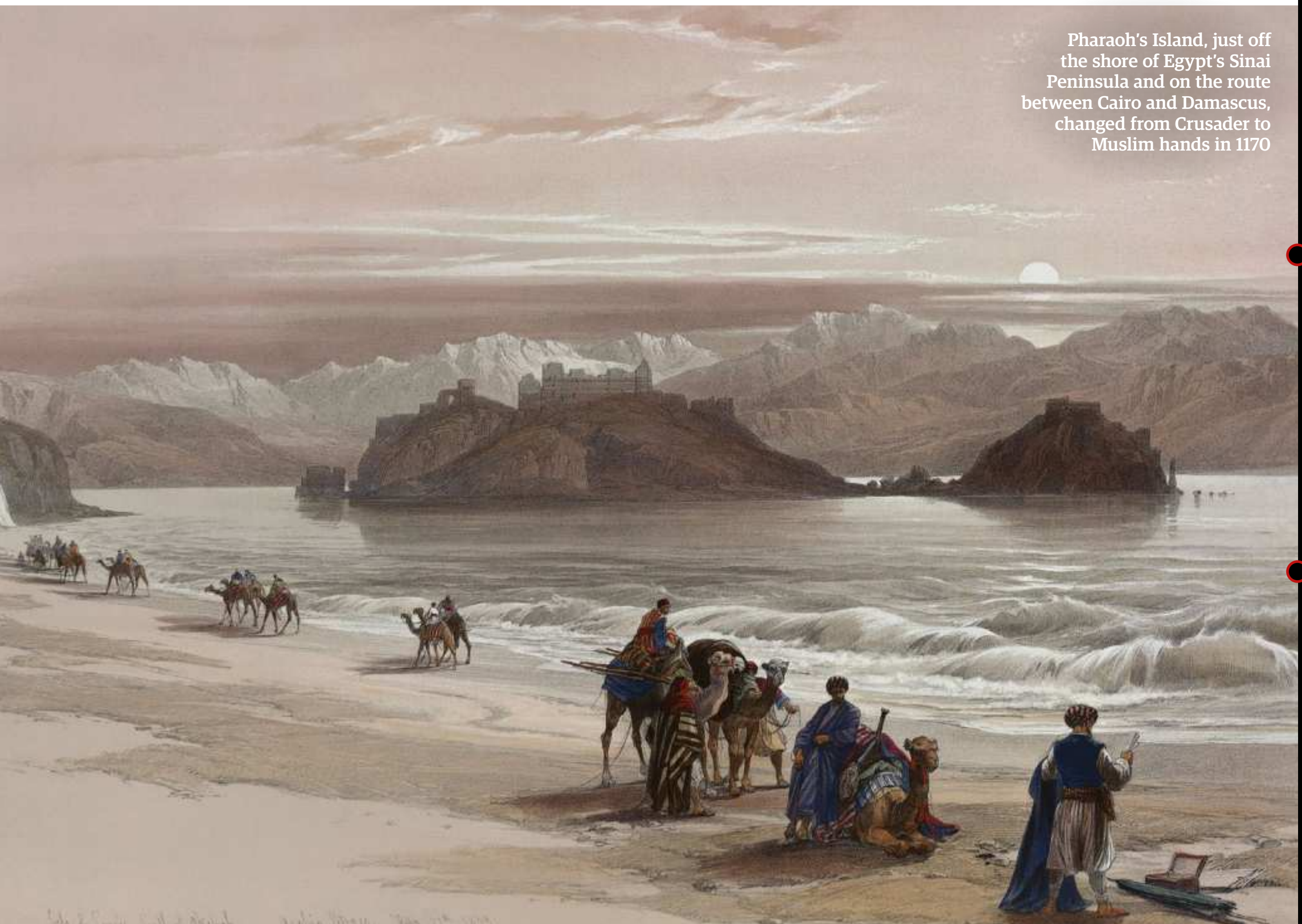
4 Morale plummets The brush fires take a heavy toll on the Crusader infantry, who become despondent. They wander onto the north horn where the rubble of a Bronze Age fort offers some protection.

6 True Cross defiled The bishop of Acre had carried into battle the jewel-encrusted relic of the cross upon which Christ died. He is slain in the battle and al-Din's soldiers bring the prize to him. After the battle, the cross is carried upside down on a lance to Damascus.

1 Enemy at the gates Saladin leads a detachment that successfully storms the town on 2 July, forcing the Latin garrison to retreat to the citadel. Among those trapped inside is Lady Eschiva, the wife of Count Raymond of Tripoli.



After killing Raynald, Saladin told Guy, "It is not the wont of kings, to kill kings; but that man had transgressed all bounds, and therefore did I treat him thus"



Pharaoh's Island, just off the shore of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and on the route between Cairo and Damascus, changed from Crusader to Muslim hands in 1170

5 key battles

Saladin had a chequered record fighting the Crusaders before his great victory at Hattin. His strategy varied between sieges, raids, and pitched battles

25 NOVEMBER 1177

Battle of Montgisard
During his first major raid into the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the autumn of 1171, Saladin underestimates the ability of King Baldwin IV to contest his advance. The Franks ambush the Ayyubids, inflicting a stinging defeat on them. Saladin himself is nearly captured and is said to have raced for the safety of Egypt on the back of a camel.

30 AUGUST 1179

Battle of Jacob's Ford
In late summer 1179, Saladin attacks the uncompleted Crusader fortress of Chastellet at Jacob's Ford on the Upper Jordan River. Despite a tenacious defence by the Knights Templar garrison, a swift siege in which professional sappers collapse a section of the wall enables the Muslims to slay the garrison.

29 SEPTEMBER - 8 OCTOBER 1183

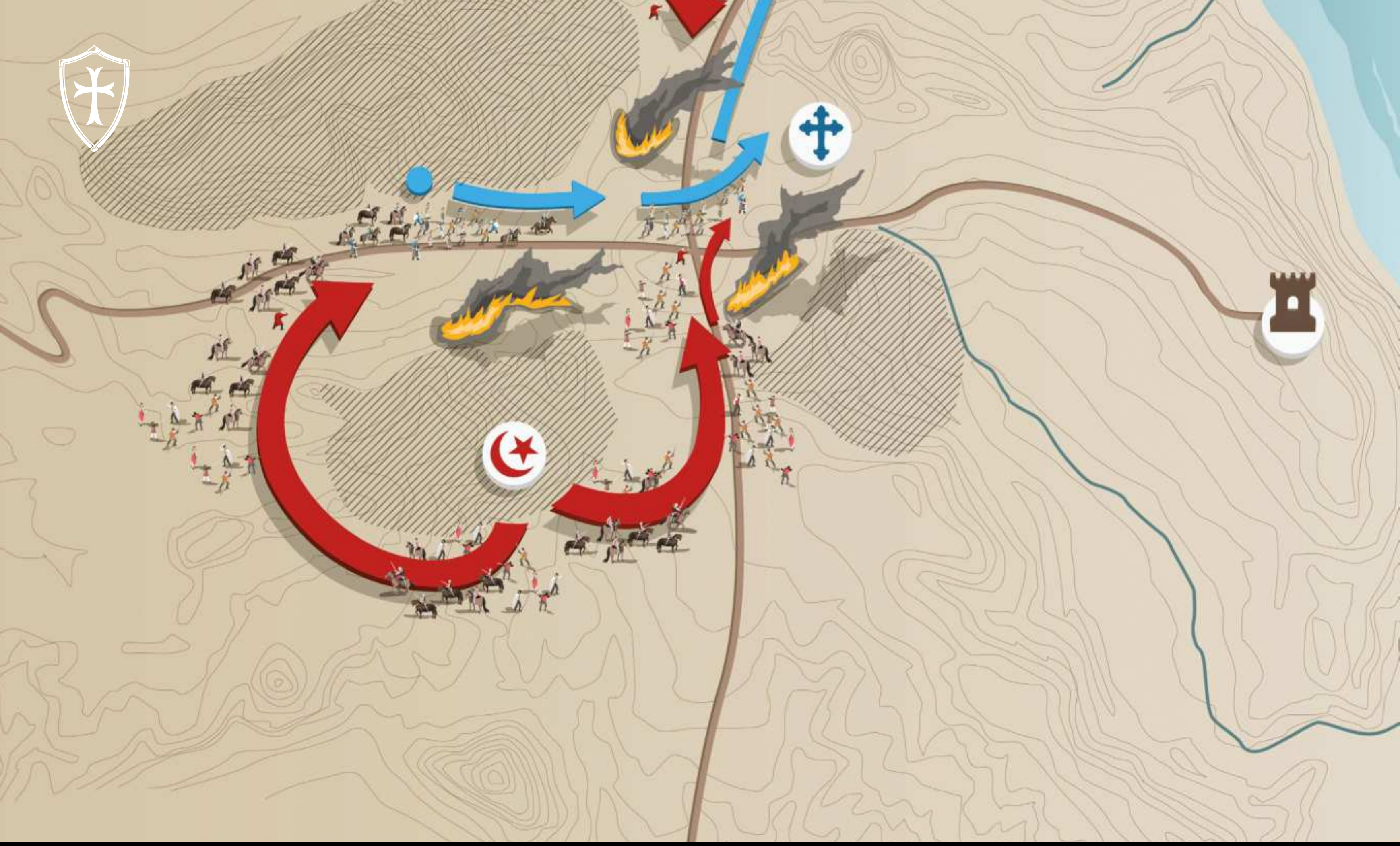
Standoff at Ayn Jalut
Intent on provoking a decisive clash with the Franks, Saladin crosses the Jordan River into Galilee. Guy of Lusignan, the regent for terminally ill King Baldwin IV, leads an army to intercept him. Saladin tries to lure the Franks into making a tactical error, but Guy entrenches and Saladin withdraws.

1 MAY 1187

Battle of Cresson
Saladin's son, Al-Afdal ibn Salah ad-Din, leads a large force into Galilee to assess Crusader strength. A passing party of Knights Templar and Hospitaller rides to intercept him. Templar Master Gerard of Ridefort impetuously orders an attack against the larger force. Al-Afdal destroys the Crusader force. Ridefort escapes, but Hospitaller Master Roger de Moulins is slain.

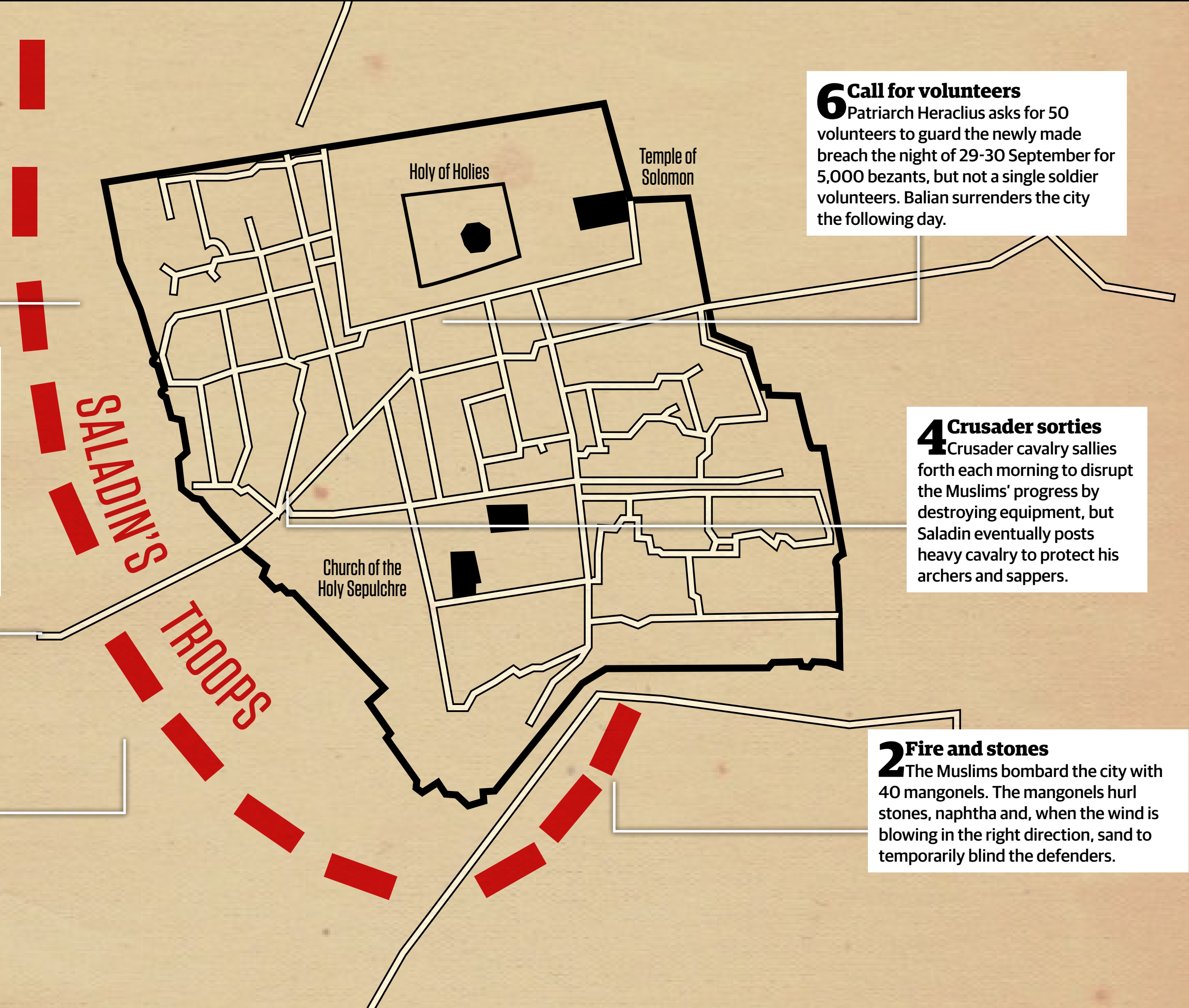
OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1187

Siege of Kerak
After failing to bring about a decisive battle in Galilee, Saladin leads his army south to besiege Kerak Castle, which still holds a Christian garrison. Although Saladin's army has catapults and towers, they are unable to successfully bridge the castle's dry moat.



The Siege of Jerusalem 20 September – 2 October 1187

After finally defeating the Crusaders on the battlefield, Saladin seized his chance to take back the Holy City



1 Construction zone While Saladin conducts a reconnaissance of the terrain surrounding Jerusalem, he orders his troops to cut tree branches and construct zaribas, which were tall screens to protect Muslim bowmen and engineers from quarrels and arrows fired from archers and crossbowmen on the battlements of Jerusalem.

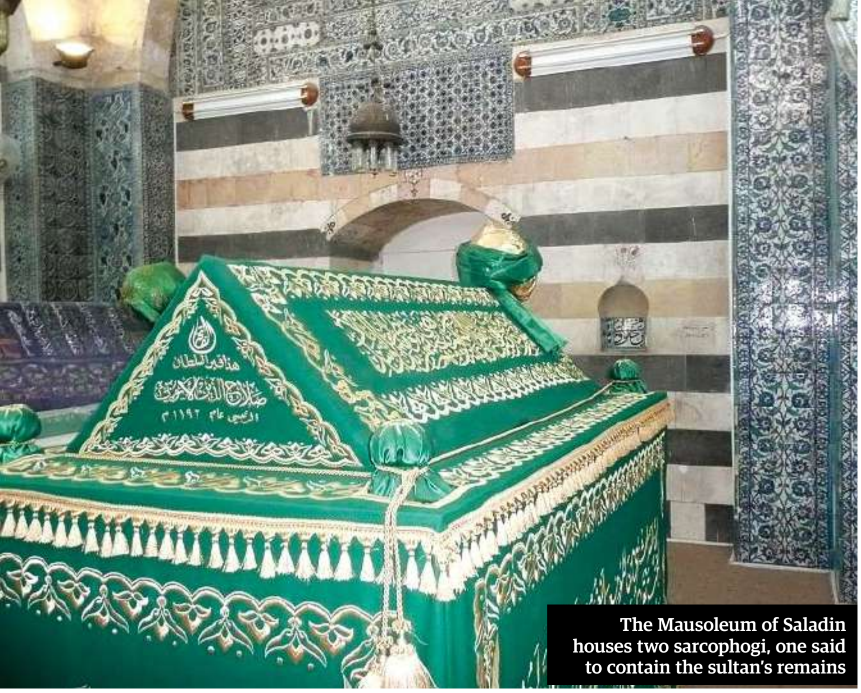
2 Fire and stones The Muslims bombard the city with 40 mangonels. The mangonels hurl stones, naphtha and, when the wind is blowing in the right direction, sand to temporarily blind the defenders.

3 Counter-battery fire A battery of Crusader mangonels mounted atop the Herodian Tower behind David's Gate hurl stones at Saladin's men on the west side of the city.

4 Crusader sorties Crusader cavalry sallies forth each morning to disrupt the Muslims' progress by destroying equipment, but Saladin eventually posts heavy cavalry to protect his archers and sappers.

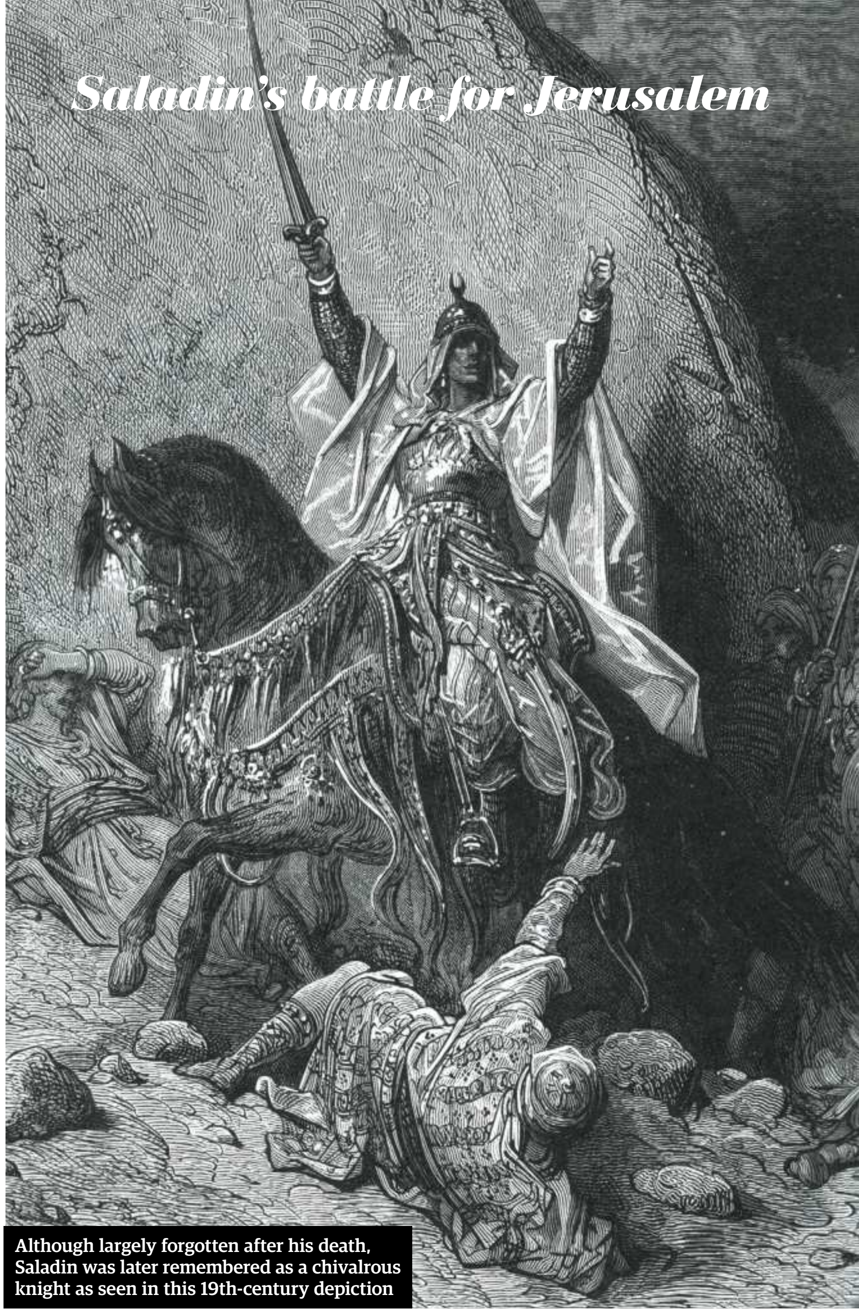
5 Wall collapse Ayyubid specialists in siege mining dig a tunnel, pack it with wood and light it on fire to weaken the ground, and ultimately collapse the wall. Muslim infantry charges through the 90-metre-wide breach to gain a foothold inside the north wall.

6 Call for volunteers Patriarch Heraclius asks for 50 volunteers to guard the newly made breach the night of 29-30 September for 5,000 bezants, but not a single soldier volunteers. Balian surrenders the city the following day.



The Mausoleum of Saladin houses two sarcophogi, one said to contain the sultan's remains

Jerusalem's Damascus Gate was known as St Stephen's gate during the Crusaders' occupation



Although largely forgotten after his death, Saladin was later remembered as a chivalrous knight as seen in this 19th-century depiction

iced water to Guy, but when Guy sought to pass it to Raynald, Saladin stopped him. Saladin then made good on his vow to kill Raynald and cut him down with his sword.

The Ayyubid sultan rightly assumed that the barons who escaped would appeal to the Latin West for reinforcements, and he sent his troops to capture as many key towns and strongholds in the Kingdom of Jerusalem as possible before reinforcements arrived. After capturing Acre on 8 July, Saladin turned his attention to Tyre. Fortunately for the Christians, a new leader had arrived earlier that month. Marquis Conrad of Montferrat, who sought to escape problems at home by taking up the cross, organised a strong defence. Saladin, who was impatient to capture Jerusalem, turned south.

Saladin's 20,000 troops arrived before the walls of Jerusalem more than two months later on 20 September. Balian of Ibelin commanded approximately 5,000 men. The population had swelled to 60,000 as a result of an influx of refugees. Unlike the setback at Tyre, the sultan had no intention of abandoning the siege. The Ayyubid leader "took an oath not to depart until he had honoured his word and raised his standard on her highest point, and had visited with his own feet the place where the Prophet [Muhammed] had set foot," wrote Imad ad-Din, who was Saladin's field secretary.

Saladin's men deployed on the north and west side opposite St Stephen's and David's gates, respectively. Over the course of five days, the Ayyubids assaulted the gates and attempted to scale the walls. After such time, the Muslims could not make any headway in their attempts to storm the west wall. For that reason, Saladin ordered them to redeploy in an arc that wrapped around the north-east corner of the city. He also issued orders for professional sappers from Aleppo to mine the walls. Several teams worked tirelessly for the next four days to weaken the walls. On 29 September, they collapsed a section of the outer wall on the north side near Herod's Gate.

Saladin spared the city. Instead of slaughtering innocents, he decided to allow them to ransom themselves. Once the ransom was paid, they would have 40 days to leave. The idea came from Saladin's advisers, according to al-Athir. "Let us consider them as already being our prisoners, and let them ransom themselves on terms agreed between us," Saladin's advisers told him.

Saladin thus set a ransom of ten gold pieces for each man, five for each woman and one for each child. About two-thirds of the Christians could pay their own ransom, but the rest were too poor to make the payment. Balian gave Saladin 30,000 gold pieces from the city's coffers to cover 7,000 of the poor, but the other 13,000 were led away to be sold into slavery.

The Muslims took control of Jerusalem on 2 October. Ayyubid banners were hoisted throughout the city. A week later, Saladin attended Friday prayers in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque. Afterwards, the sultan ordered that the mosque, which had been desecrated, be restored to its original glory with marble, gold tiling and mosaics.

Shortly afterwards, King Richard I of England and King Philip II of France both took the cross determined to recapture Jerusalem. They participated in the bloody Third Crusade against Saladin from 1189 to 1192.

Although the Crusaders retook Acre and other strongholds, they were unable to recapture the Holy City. Jerusalem remained in Muslim hands as a result of Saladin's ability to unify and mobilise previously divided Muslim groups against the Crusaders.

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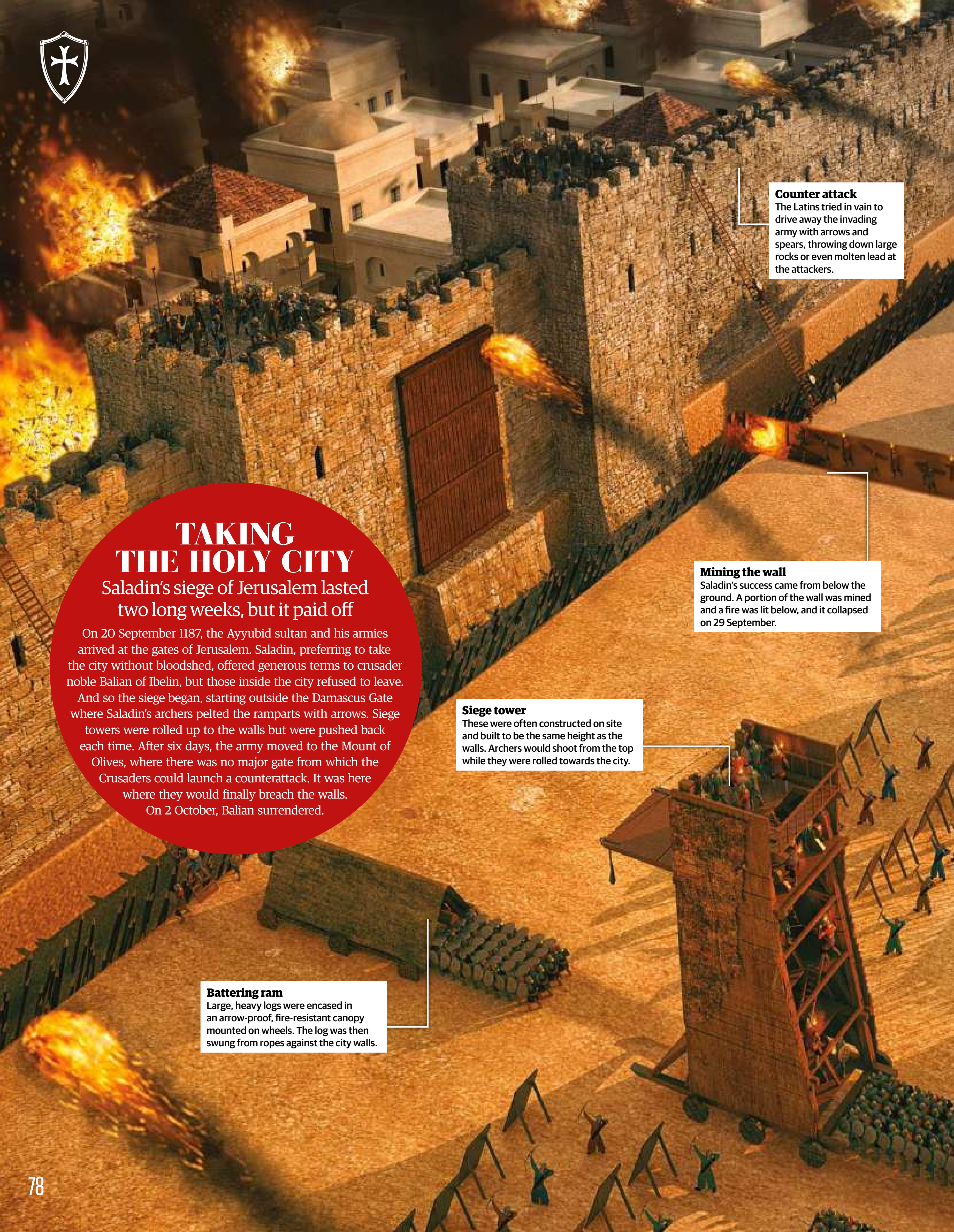
TAKING THE HOLY CITY

Saladin's siege of Jerusalem lasted two long weeks, but it paid off

On 20 September 1187, the Ayyubid sultan and his armies arrived at the gates of Jerusalem. Saladin, preferring to take the city without bloodshed, offered generous terms to crusader noble Balian of Ibelin, but those inside the city refused to leave. And so the siege began, starting outside the Damascus Gate where Saladin's archers pelted the ramparts with arrows. Siege towers were rolled up to the walls but were pushed back each time. After six days, the army moved to the Mount of Olives, where there was no major gate from which the Crusaders could launch a counterattack. It was here where they would finally breach the walls. On 2 October, Balian surrendered.



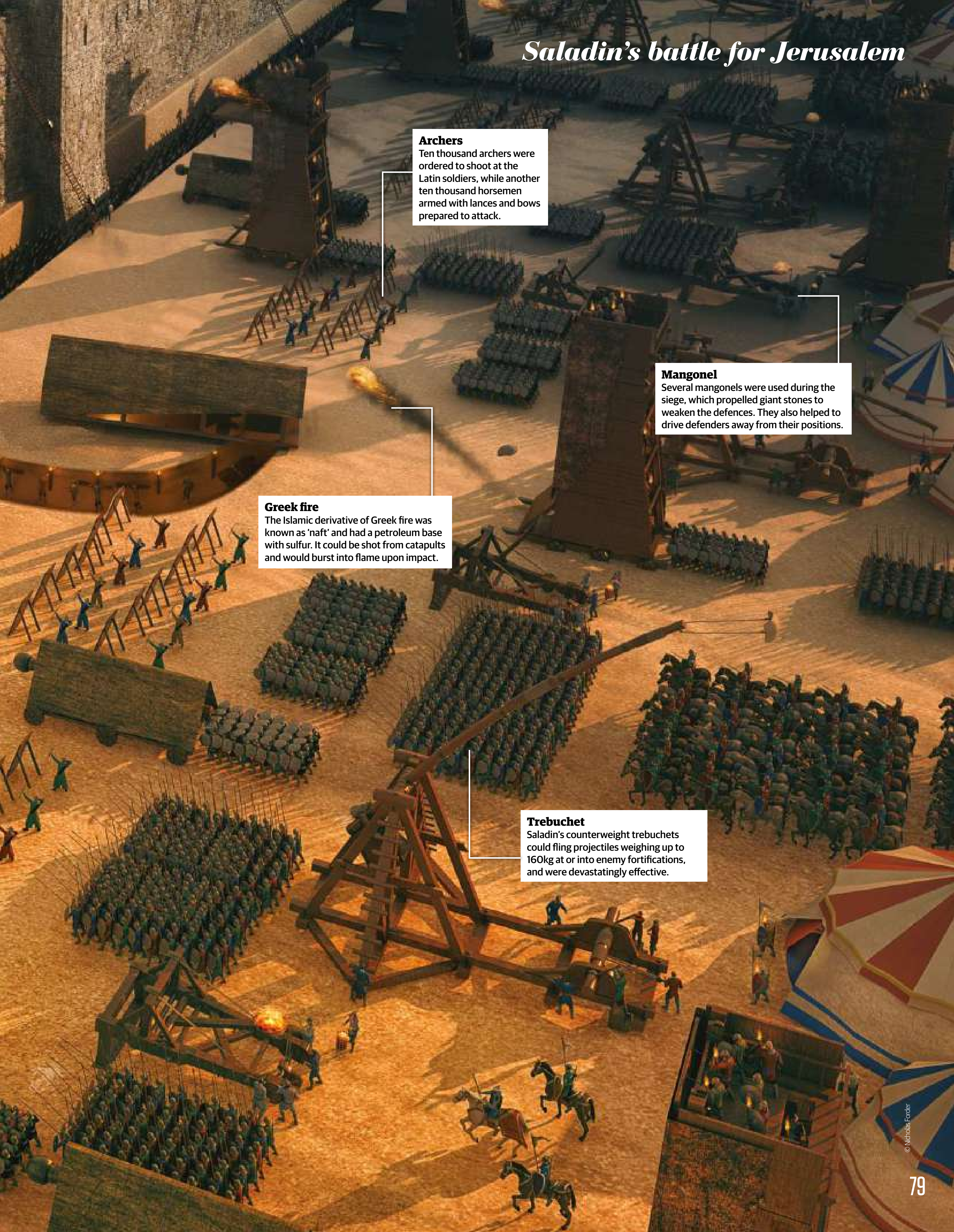
Counter attack
The Latins tried in vain to drive away the invading army with arrows and spears, throwing down large rocks or even molten lead at the attackers.

Mining the wall
Saladin's success came from below the ground. A portion of the wall was mined and a fire was lit below, and it collapsed on 29 September.

Siege tower
These were often constructed on site and built to be the same height as the walls. Archers would shoot from the top while they were rolled towards the city.

Battering ram
Large, heavy logs were encased in an arrow-proof, fire-resistant canopy mounted on wheels. The log was then swung from ropes against the city walls.

Saladin's battle for Jerusalem



Archers
Ten thousand archers were ordered to shoot at the Latin soldiers, while another ten thousand horsemen armed with lances and bows prepared to attack.

Mangonel
Several mangonels were used during the siege, which propelled giant stones to weaken the defences. They also helped to drive defenders away from their positions.

Greek fire
The Islamic derivative of Greek fire was known as 'naft' and had a petroleum base with sulfur. It could be shot from catapults and would burst into flame upon impact.

Trebuchet
Saladin's counterweight trebuchets could fling projectiles weighing up to 160kg at or into enemy fortifications, and were devastatingly effective.

© Nicholas Forder

Richard the Lionheart

Born to royalty but educated in the charnel gutter of war, King Richard brought the religious fanaticism of the Christian West on the Muslim East in a quest to claim the fabled Holy Land

Written by Robert Jones

For almost a year, the mighty city of Acre held firm. Despite wave after wave of Christian knights pouring all their religious fervour and military might into its ancient walls, it had held back the tide and somehow halted the progress of the foreign hordes that now threatened to overrun the entire Near East.

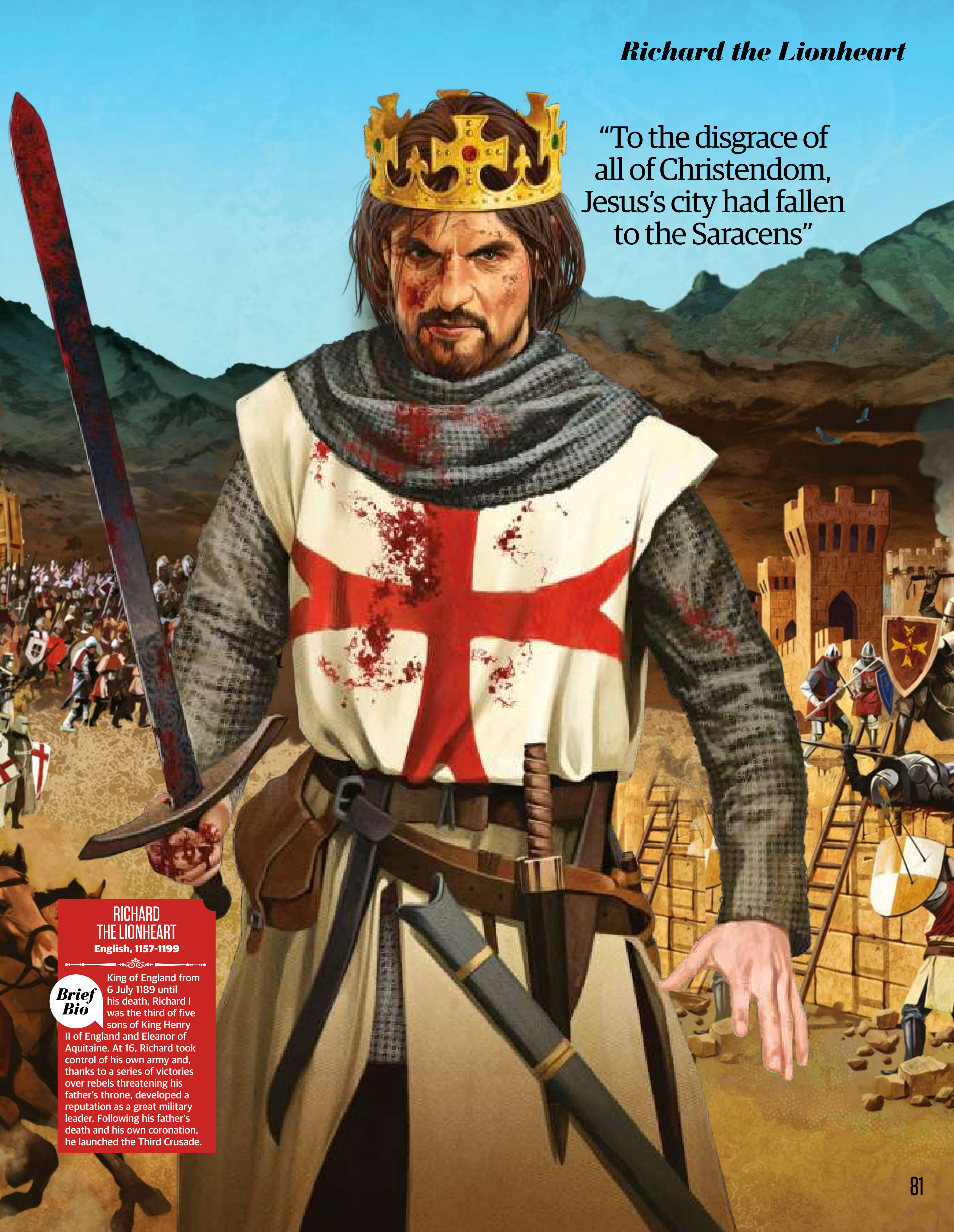
More and more men came, though - the attacks were relentless. When the first army had been held at bay, the city's inhabitants thought they were safe, that the invasion was defeated. However, then yet another army landed and the city's main artery, its port, which provided passage in and out of its walls, was taken. The city's defences were tested once more, with an even more ferocious attack battering at the doors and calling for blood. Luckily for those within, once more the city held off the mass of warriors, its infidel leaders repelled.

Then, with the new year's sailing season, another invader arrived by sea with a fresh, bloodthirsty army. He was followed in May by yet another, with tens of thousands of soldiers joining the infidels' camp outside the walls, swelling their numbers to terrifying proportions. They attacked again, and the losses on both sides were massive. The lack of food and supplies in the city, and the spread of disease within the invaders' camp drove both sets of warriors to extremes, stoking the fires of faith that lay within their hearts to pursue bolder and bolder acts of violence.

Today is the eighth day of June 1191 and, as Acre slowly suffocates in the oppressive heat of the Levant's summer months, yet another fleet is landing in the city's once-prosperous port, this time with one of the biggest forces the city has ever seen. If the ruler of Acre, the noble and great Saladin, doesn't send meaningful reinforcements soon, then the city will fall and the gates to the Holy Land will be brutally wrenched open to the Christian hordes.

They call this one, this man-mountain stepping off his ship onto the dusty dry shore, the Lionheart, and he is here to kill them all in the name of his god and glory. The passage had been long and painful, featuring storms, shipwrecks and a mad despot who threatened to derail the Third Crusade before it had even begun. No matter, King Richard the Lionheart and his army had survived the trip across the Mediterranean Sea and reached the Holy Land. After months of pursuit and planning, they were primed to fulfil their mission, Richard's mission, God's mission - to take the Holy Land by storm and cut a direct path to the holiest of all cities: Jerusalem.

To the disgrace of all of Christendom, Jesus's city had fallen four years previous to the Saracen Ayyubid hordes, which was now not only ruled by Christianity's arch-nemesis, Saladin, but also defiled by their very presence within its hallowed walls. The city, which had been safely held in Christian hands for almost 100 years since the First Crusade had established the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1099, had been ordered to be retaken by none other than the Pope in Rome. Richard, a devout and deeply religious king, had heeded the call. Here he now



“To the disgrace of all of Christendom, Jesus’s city had fallen to the Saracens”

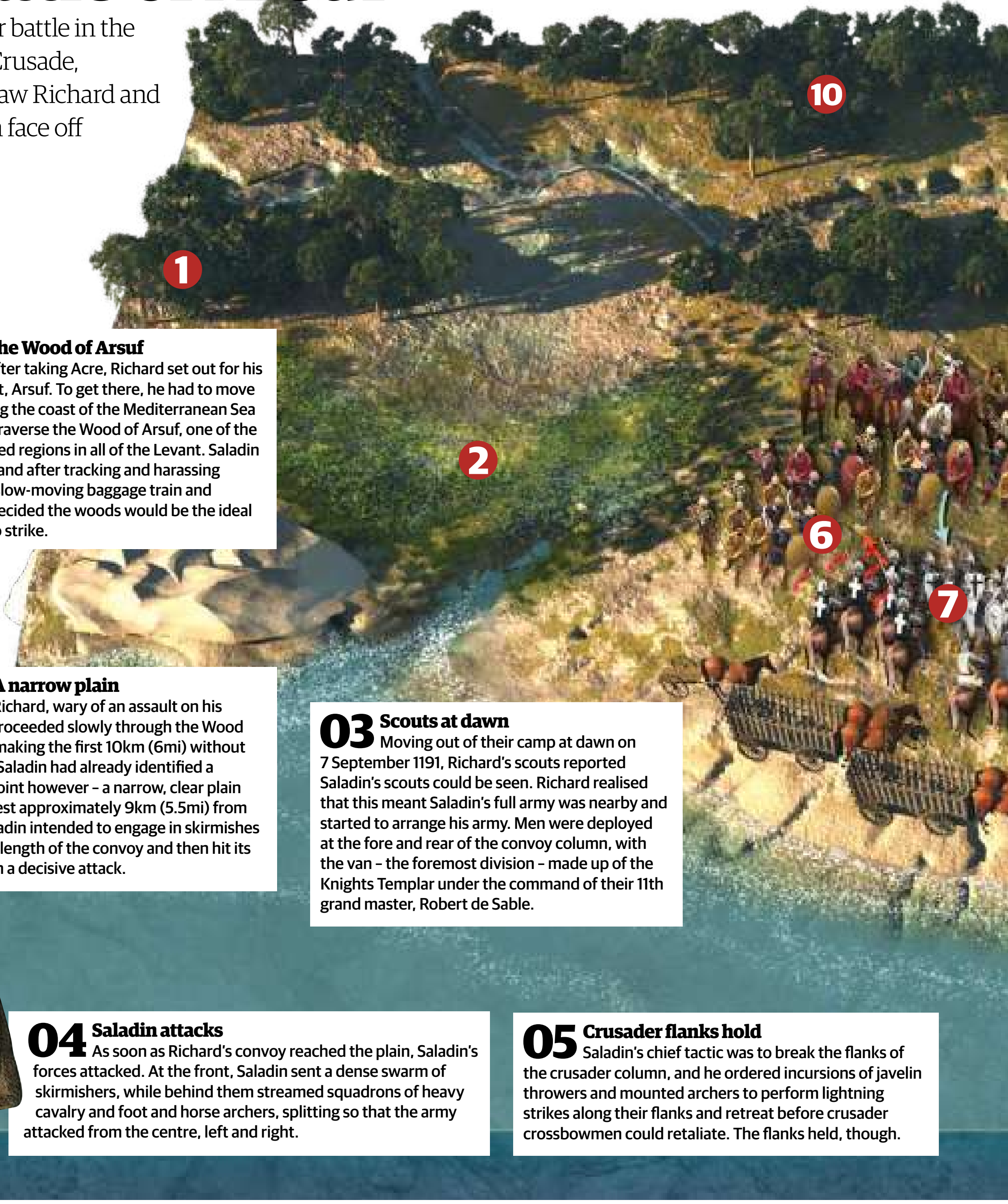
RICHARD THE LIONHEART

English, 1157-1199

Brief Bio King of England from 6 July 1189 until his death, Richard I was the third of five sons of King Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine. At 16, Richard took control of his own army and, thanks to a series of victories over rebels threatening his father’s throne, developed a reputation as a great military leader. Following his father’s death and his own coronation, he launched the Third Crusade.

Battle of Arsuf

A major battle in the Third Crusade, Arsuf saw Richard and Saladin face off



01 The Wood of Arsuf
After taking Acre, Richard set out for his next target, Arsuf. To get there, he had to move south along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and then traverse the Wood of Arsuf, one of the few forested regions in all of the Levant. Saladin knew this and after tracking and harassing Richard's slow-moving baggage train and infantry, decided the woods would be the ideal position to strike.

02 A narrow plain
Richard, wary of an assault on his convoy, proceeded slowly through the Wood of Arsuf, making the first 10km (6mi) without incident. Saladin had already identified a striking point however – a narrow, clear plain in the forest approximately 9km (5.5mi) from Arsuf. Saladin intended to engage in skirmishes along the length of the convoy and then hit its rear with a decisive attack.

03 Scouts at dawn
Moving out of their camp at dawn on 7 September 1191, Richard's scouts reported Saladin's scouts could be seen. Richard realised that this meant Saladin's full army was nearby and started to arrange his army. Men were deployed at the fore and rear of the convoy column, with the van – the foremost division – made up of the Knights Templar under the command of their 11th grand master, Robert de Sable.

04 Saladin attacks
As soon as Richard's convoy reached the plain, Saladin's forces attacked. At the front, Saladin sent a dense swarm of skirmishers, while behind them streamed squadrons of heavy cavalry and foot and horse archers, splitting so that the army attacked from the centre, left and right.

05 Crusader flanks hold
Saladin's chief tactic was to break the flanks of the crusader column, and he ordered incursions of javelin throwers and mounted archers to perform lightning strikes along their flanks and retreat before crusader crossbowmen could retaliate. The flanks held, though.

stood, ready to do his duty to the one true god. Conquering Acre was merely the first step in wrestling Jerusalem from Saladin's grip.

So far the city's capture and wider crusade had been in the hands of a number of other leaders. These included Guy of Lusignan – a proud Poitevin knight and the supposed rightful king of Jerusalem through his marriage to Sibylla of Jerusalem – and King Philip II of France, who had helped raise the 'Saladin tithe' to pay for the crusade. The Duke of Austria, Leopold V, had overall command of the imperial forces. There had been yet more leaders at the siege's instigation the summer previous but illness and disease had claimed many over the winter months, with Frederick of Swabia and even the holy Patriarch Heraclius of Jerusalem all passing from this mortal world into the next.

The siege itself had stalled, so every passing week threatened to allow Saladin to outmanoeuvre the crusaders. Richard, being the honed and experienced military leader that he was, realised this and after meeting with the other leaders, gave orders for vast siege engines to be built, ones that could bring down the city's walls. These engines,

Counter seal (1195) of Richard I of England

Crusaders

Number of troops: 20,000

Leader

Richard the Lionheart

Excellent on the battlefield, Richard the Lionheart was a brutal killer and a gifted tactical thinker, leading an army of religious fanatics with ruthless efficiency.

Strength Amazing warrior and powerful military leader.

Weakness Politically and economically reckless as king.

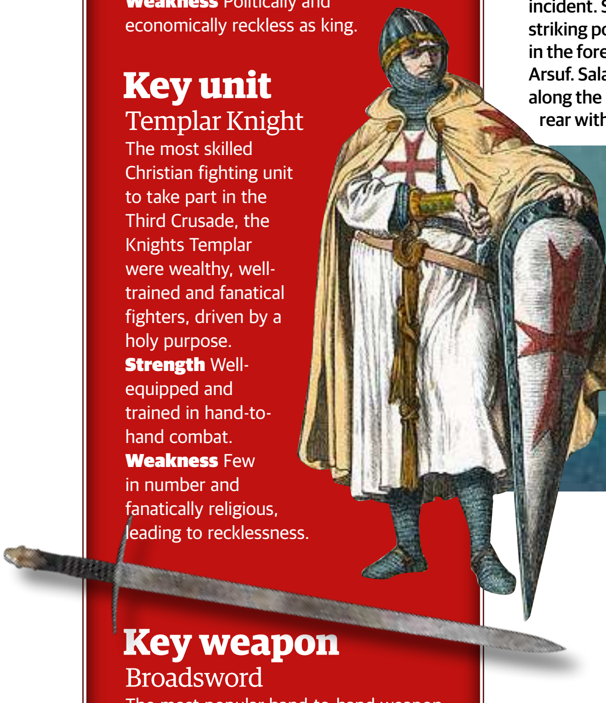
Key unit

Templar Knight

The most skilled Christian fighting unit to take part in the Third Crusade, the Knights Templar were wealthy, well-trained and fanatical fighters, driven by a holy purpose.

Strength Well-equipped and trained in hand-to-hand combat.

Weakness Few in number and fanatically religious, leading to recklessness.



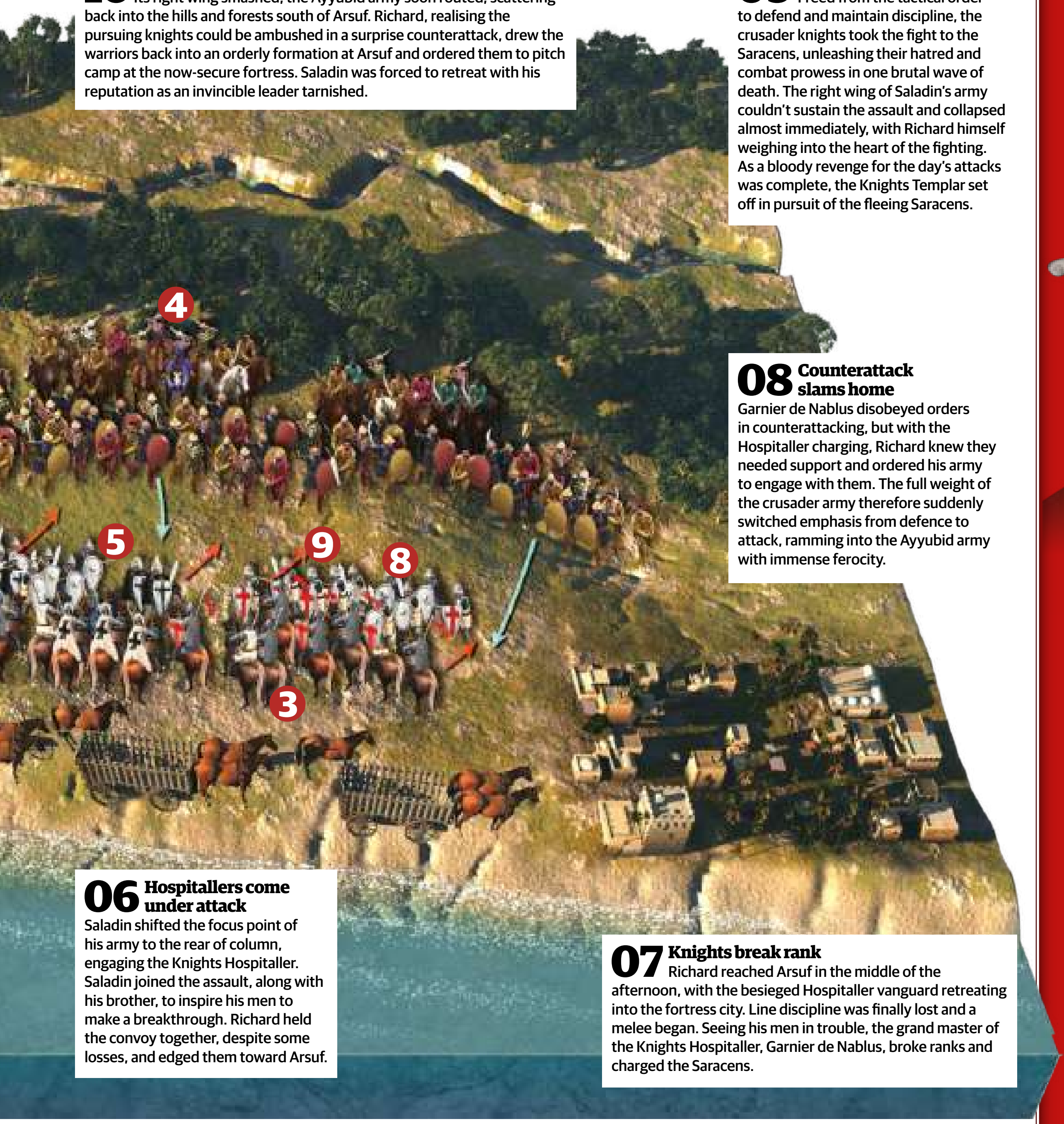
Key weapon

Broadsword

The most popular hand-to-hand weapon of all Christian knight orders, including the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller, the broadsword was a well-balanced and deadly weapon capable of stabbing and cleaving.

Strength Great all-round weapon that also allowed shield use.

Weakness Could be out-ranged with two-handed swords and spears.



06 Hospitallers come under attack

Saladin shifted the focus point of his army to the rear of column, engaging the Knights Hospitaller. Saladin joined the assault, along with his brother, to inspire his men to make a breakthrough. Richard held the convoy together, despite some losses, and edged them toward Arsuf.

07 Knights break rank

Richard reached Arsuf in the middle of the afternoon, with the besieged Hospitaller vanguard retreating into the fortress city. Line discipline was finally lost and a melee began. Seeing his men in trouble, the grand master of the Knights Hospitaller, Garnier de Nablus, broke ranks and charged the Saracens.

08 Counterattack slams home

Garnier de Nablus disobeyed orders in counterattacking, but with the Hospitaller charging, Richard knew they needed support and ordered his army to engage with them. The full weight of the crusader army therefore suddenly switched emphasis from defence to attack, ramming into the Ayyubid army with immense ferocity.

09 Templars let loose

Freed from the tactical order to defend and maintain discipline, the crusader knights took the fight to the Saracens, unleashing their hatred and combat prowess in one brutal wave of death. The right wing of Saladin's army couldn't sustain the assault and collapsed almost immediately, with Richard himself weighing into the heart of the fighting. As a bloody revenge for the day's attacks was complete, the Knights Templar set off in pursuit of the fleeing Saracens.

10 Ayyubid army scatters

Its right wing smashed, the Ayyubid army soon routed, scattering back into the hills and forests south of Arsuf. Richard, realising the pursuing knights could be ambushed in a surprise counterattack, drew the warriors back into an orderly formation at Arsuf and ordered them to pitch camp at the now-secure fortress. Saladin was forced to retreat with his reputation as an invincible leader tarnished.

these machines of death, once completed, towered over the Christian knights and, when unleashed, brought the siege into a deadly endgame.

Colossal boulders rained down upon Acre's walls, smashing against them with thunderous brutality. Corpses of animals and Muslim soldiers littered the city's streets, spreading disease and sapping the morale of the terrified residents. Most fearsome of all though, flaming balls and arrows set ablaze anything that wasn't made out of stone, causing panic to quickly spread among Acre's populace. The surviving Muslim soldiers defended bravely, but the sheer carnage and chaos the machines and men of war now levied on the city was too much and, after a month of death and destruction, the remaining Muslim garrison within the city surrendered, which was a direct violation of Saladin's orders.

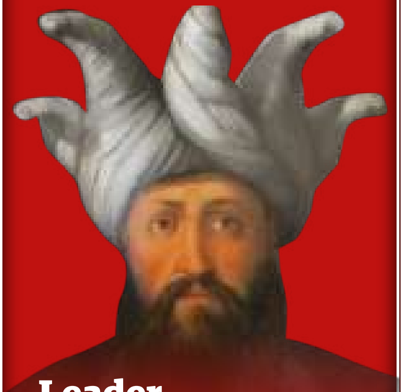
On receiving the news of Acre's fall, Saladin immediately set out for the city. On his way, he received news that Richard had taken the surrendering Muslim garrison of 2,400 men captive and was offering their return for a ransom. Saladin, known for his loyalty to his men and his wisdom, agreed to the ransom, which not only included monetary compensation but also the release of all of his Christian prisoners.

In Acre, the banners of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, France, England and the Duchy of Austria fluttered in the light breeze. With Acre down, Richard knew that only the city of Jaffa

Muslims

Number of troops:

25,000



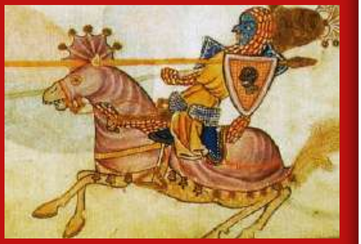
Leader

Saladin

He attained his exalted position as leader of the Ayyubid army and founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and was a wise and experienced military commander.

Strength Respected tactical thinker and powerful politician.

Weakness Hands-off leader with little personal combat prowess.



Key unit

Mounted archer

The light cavalry of Saladin was feared throughout the world due to its ability to strike quickly and at range, with skilled marksmen riding the world's fastest horses.

Strength Fast units that excelled in ambush and hit-and-run attacks.

Weakness Easily cut down by knights in hand-to-hand combat.

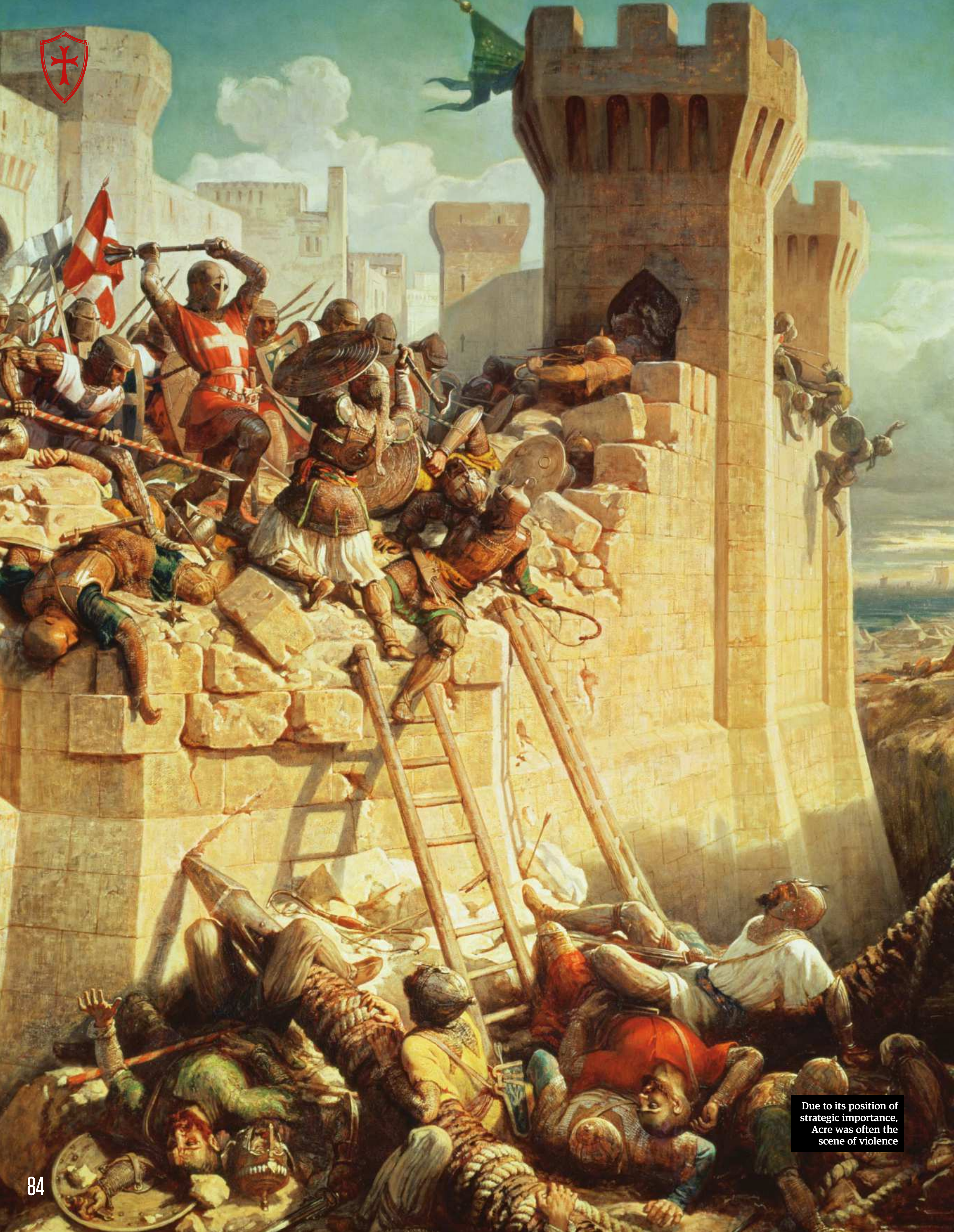
Key weapon

Short bow

Saladin's mamluk infantry and his light cavalry units excelled in bowmanship, with their short bows used to swarm arrows on crusader forces at every opportunity.

Strengths Fast to fire and reload with good stopping power.

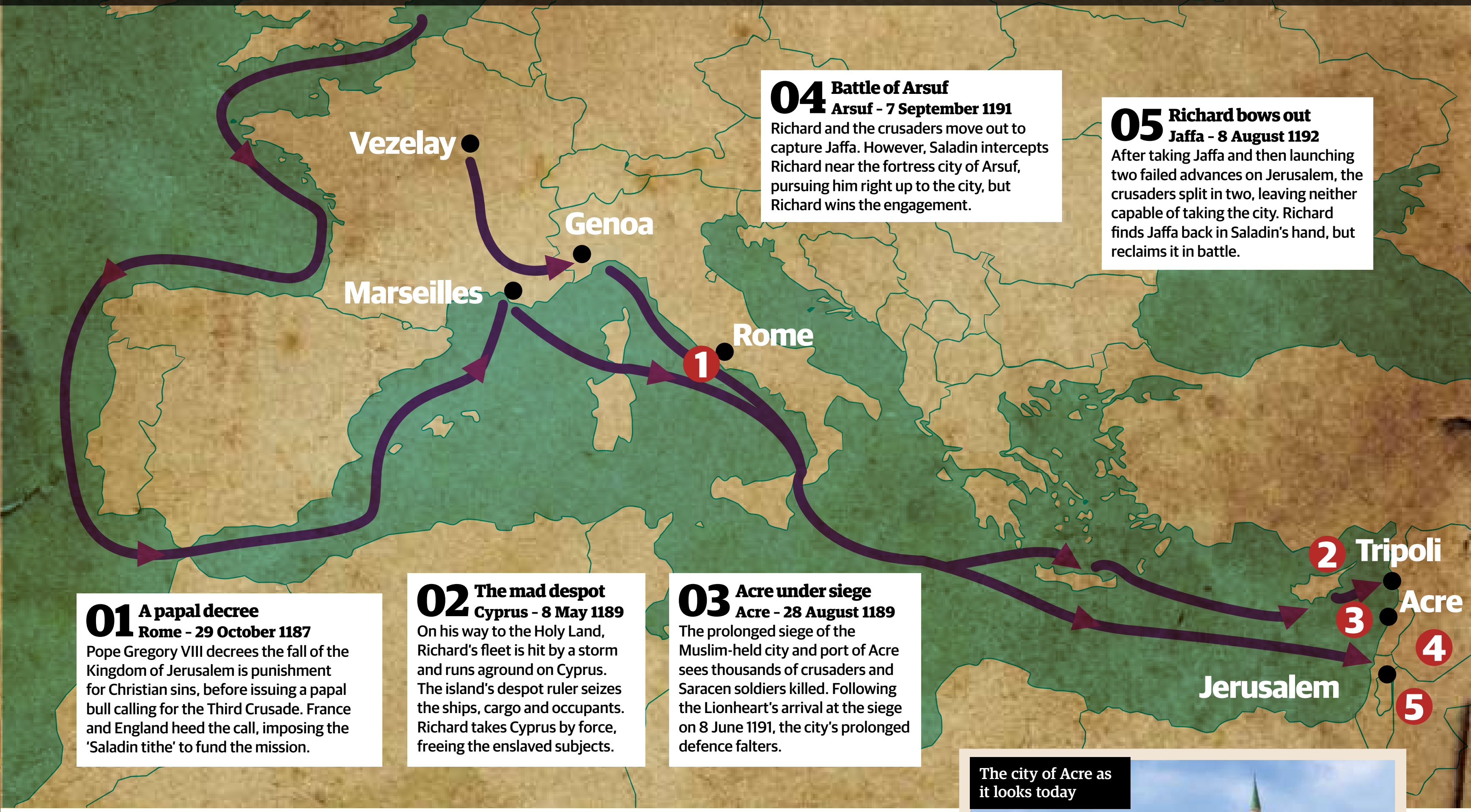
Weakness Could be outranged by the longbow and all-but-useless in hand-to-hand combat.



Due to its position of strategic importance, Acre was often the scene of violence

Lionheart's Crusade

The Third Crusade faced challenges even before reaching the Holy Land



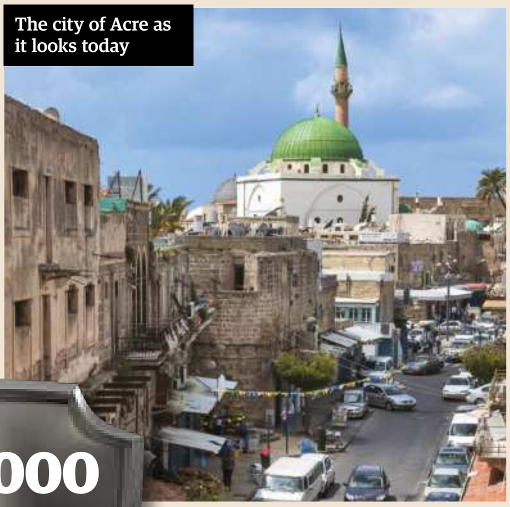
01 **A papal decree**
Rome – 29 October 1187
Pope Gregory VIII decrees the fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem is punishment for Christian sins, before issuing a papal bull calling for the Third Crusade. France and England heed the call, imposing the 'Saladin tithe' to fund the mission.

02 **The mad despot**
Cyprus – 8 May 1189
On his way to the Holy Land, Richard's fleet is hit by a storm and runs aground on Cyprus. The island's despot ruler seizes the ships, cargo and occupants. Richard takes Cyprus by force, freeing the enslaved subjects.

03 **Acre under siege**
Acre – 28 August 1189
The prolonged siege of the Muslim-held city and port of Acre sees thousands of crusaders and Saracen soldiers killed. Following the Lionheart's arrival at the siege on 8 June 1191, the city's prolonged defence falters.

04 **Battle of Arsuf**
Arsuf – 7 September 1191
Richard and the crusaders move out to capture Jaffa. However, Saladin intercepts Richard near the fortress city of Arsuf, pursuing him right up to the city, but Richard wins the engagement.

05 **Richard bows out**
Jaffa – 8 August 1192
After taking Jaffa and then launching two failed advances on Jerusalem, the crusaders split in two, leaving neither capable of taking the city. Richard finds Jaffa back in Saladin's hand, but reclaims it in battle.


The city of Acre as it looks today

> "They call this one the Lionheart and he is here to kill them all in the name of his god and glory"

to the south stood in their way of making a direct assault on Jerusalem, so he began making preparations for the continued crusade, as well as for the reparation of the sacked city. These preparations were swiftly interrupted by an argument that developed between the conquering leaders as to how the city should be divided up and to how the spoils of their victory should be apportioned. This quarrelling led Richard to strike down the Austrian standard from above the city's walls, slighting Leopold, as the king of England sided with Guy of Lusignan rather than Philip and Leopold over who should become king of Jerusalem when the city was taken. Philip and Leopold preferred fellow crusader and Italian nobleman Conrad of Montferrat, with Phillip so angry he threatened to return to Europe.

This cauldron of scheming and disagreement was tipped over the edge when Saladin delayed in paying the garrison's ransom. An already irate and disgruntled Richard deemed the lateness a massive slight and ordered every single one of the garrison to be executed. Saladin reached the city just as the decision was made, but could only watch as man after man was publicly executed, their heads lopped from their shoulders atop the city walls. Thousands died. The enraged Saladin replied like-for-like, executing the 1,000 Christian prisoners in his custody. Whatever deal could conceivably have been reached between the rival leaders now lay in ruins, seemingly as dead as the unfortunate prisoners.

Angered and frustrated with Richard and Guy, Philip and Leopold finally decided that their participation in the Third Crusade was at an end, leaving in late August for their European homes. For Richard, though, such betrayal of faith was unimaginable, and after calling on Philip to do right in the eyes of god, he managed to persuade him to leave behind 10,000 French crusaders along with the necessary funds to pay for their upkeep. The Lionheart was now the central remaining commander of more than 20,000 crusaders, knights and soldiers and, burning with glorious purpose, ordered the continuation of the crusade, with the bulk of the crusading army marching out of Acre in August's final days. There was no doubt who was now leading this holy crusade.

The next city on the crusaders' relentless march to Jerusalem was Jaffa, an important port that

£70,000
Amount raised by the 'Saladin tithe' to fund the Third Crusade

provided passage into the southern Mediterranean Sea. As long as Jaffa remained untaken Saladin had a natural avenue to pour more of his troops into the region from his impregnable stronghold of Egypt, but if it fell to the crusaders Saladin would be forced to move men over land, a far less effective and more time-consuming proposition. The city also lay a mere 65 kilometres (40 miles) from Jerusalem, making it the ideal coastal base for crusaders. Before it could be taken, though, the crusaders needed to get there in one piece. Richard knew Saladin was somewhere in the nearby area and, aware of his enemy's skill in arranging ambushes, ordered his troops to march down the Mediterranean coastline, with the baggage train protected by being nearest to the coast. This tactic prevented Saladin from attacking on one flank, as Richard also got his fleet to sail down the coast in parallel with them, shutting off the sea as an avenue of possible attack.

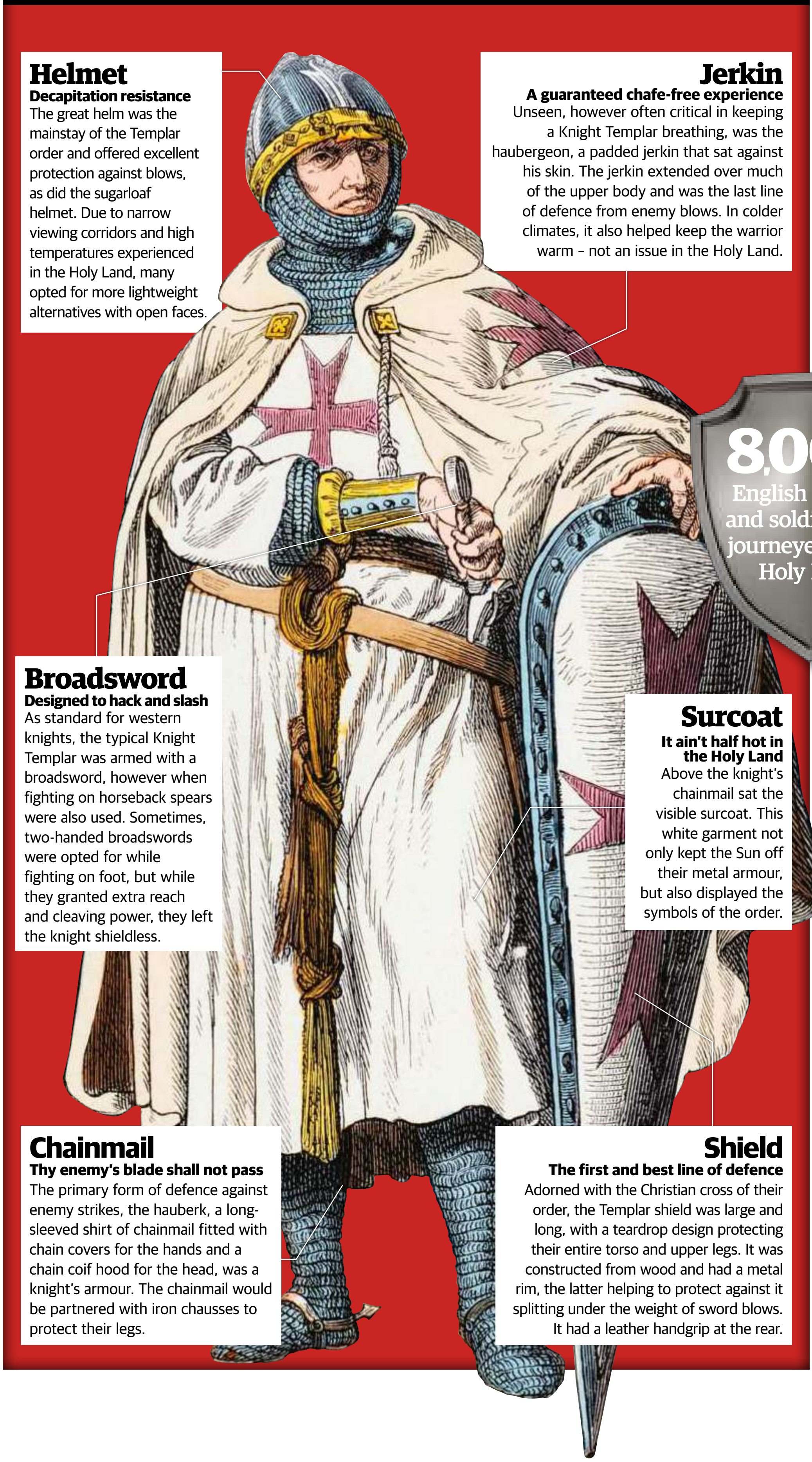
However, to the north of Jaffa lay the Wood of Arsuf, one of the only forested areas in all of the Levant. The woods ran parallel to the coastline for over 20 kilometres (12 miles) and had to be traversed by Richard's army if they were to reach Jaffa. After harassing Richard's troops with small hit-and-run attacks within the woods, Saladin sanctioned a full-scale assault on the crusaders, which led to the largest pitched battle of the Third Crusade. Saladin knew the battle would be decisive, but couldn't possibly have foreseen how disastrous for him it would be. As the Sun went down on 7 September 1191, the Saracen army had been routed in a decisive counterattack led by Richard's Knights Hospitaller. Saladin retreated from Arsuf to regroup what was left of his battered army and lick his wounds. The crusaders made a beeline for Jaffa, swiftly besieging and taking it. Despite some disagreement with the other crusader leaders, Richard – with Jerusalem almost in sight – decided to open negotiations with his enemy. Saladin, who was being questioned by some of his subjects following the defeat at Arsuf, agreed to the negotiations and sent his brother, Al-Adil to Jaffa to lead the talks. Despite headway being made – at one time Richard's sister Joan was being

8,000
English knights and soldiers who journeyed to the Holy Land

> "Saladin could only watch as man after man was publicly executed, their heads lopped from their shoulders atop the city walls"

Anatomy of a Templar Knight

The key kit and weapons carried by the most elite of Christian warriors



Helmet

Decapitation resistance

The great helm was the mainstay of the Templar order and offered excellent protection against blows, as did the sugarloaf helmet. Due to narrow viewing corridors and high temperatures experienced in the Holy Land, many opted for more lightweight alternatives with open faces.

Jerkin

A guaranteed chafe-free experience

Unseen, however often critical in keeping a Knight Templar breathing, was the haubergeon, a padded jerkin that sat against his skin. The jerkin extended over much of the upper body and was the last line of defence from enemy blows. In colder climates, it also helped keep the warrior warm – not an issue in the Holy Land.

Broadsword

Designed to hack and slash

As standard for western knights, the typical Knight Templar was armed with a broadsword, however when fighting on horseback spears were also used. Sometimes, two-handed broadswords were opted for while fighting on foot, but while they granted extra reach and cleaving power, they left the knight shieldless.

Surcoat

It ain't half hot in the Holy Land

Above the knight's chainmail sat the visible surcoat. This white garment not only kept the Sun off their metal armour, but also displayed the symbols of the order.

Chainmail

Thy enemy's blade shall not pass

The primary form of defence against enemy strikes, the hauberk, a long-sleeved shirt of chainmail fitted with chain covers for the hands and a chain coif hood for the head, was a knight's armour. The chainmail would be partnered with iron chausses to protect their legs.

Shield

The first and best line of defence

Adorned with the Christian cross of their order, the Templar shield was large and long, with a teardrop design protecting their entire torso and upper legs. It was constructed from wood and had a metal rim, the latter helping to protect against it splitting under the weight of sword blows. It had a leather handgrip at the rear.

talked about as a potential bride for Al-Adil with Jerusalem as a wedding gift – the talks ultimately broke down.

The breakdown of the talks caused unrest in the crusader ranks, with arguments arising about the best way to proceed towards their goal. Richard, growing tired of the constant in-fighting, acted decisively and ordered the army to move on Jerusalem in November, first moving through Ascalon and then Latrun. The Christian army was soon at Beit Nuba, a mere 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Jerusalem. The news quickly spread of the crusaders' progress and the morale in the Muslim garrisons within the city crumbled. Saladin's forces had been crushed, Acre, Arsuf and Jaffa taken, and Jerusalem looked set to be next. Victory for the Third Crusade seemed inevitable.

At this vital point, hesitation crept in to the crusader ranks, though. Saladin had proven himself a worthy and tricky foe and, not knowing the extent to which his forces had been depleted, Richard feared that a retaliation attack, most likely another large-scale ambush, was very near. In addition, the weather in the winter months had taken a marked turn for the worse, with heavy rain and hail leading to poor conditions under foot. These factors caused Richard to pause for thought rather than make straight for the holy city and he consulted his fellow crusaders. It was agreed that if they started besieging Jerusalem and were hit with a relieving force from Saladin, the general poor conditions would lead to a massacre. As such, Richard ordered a retreat back to the coast. The attack would have to wait.

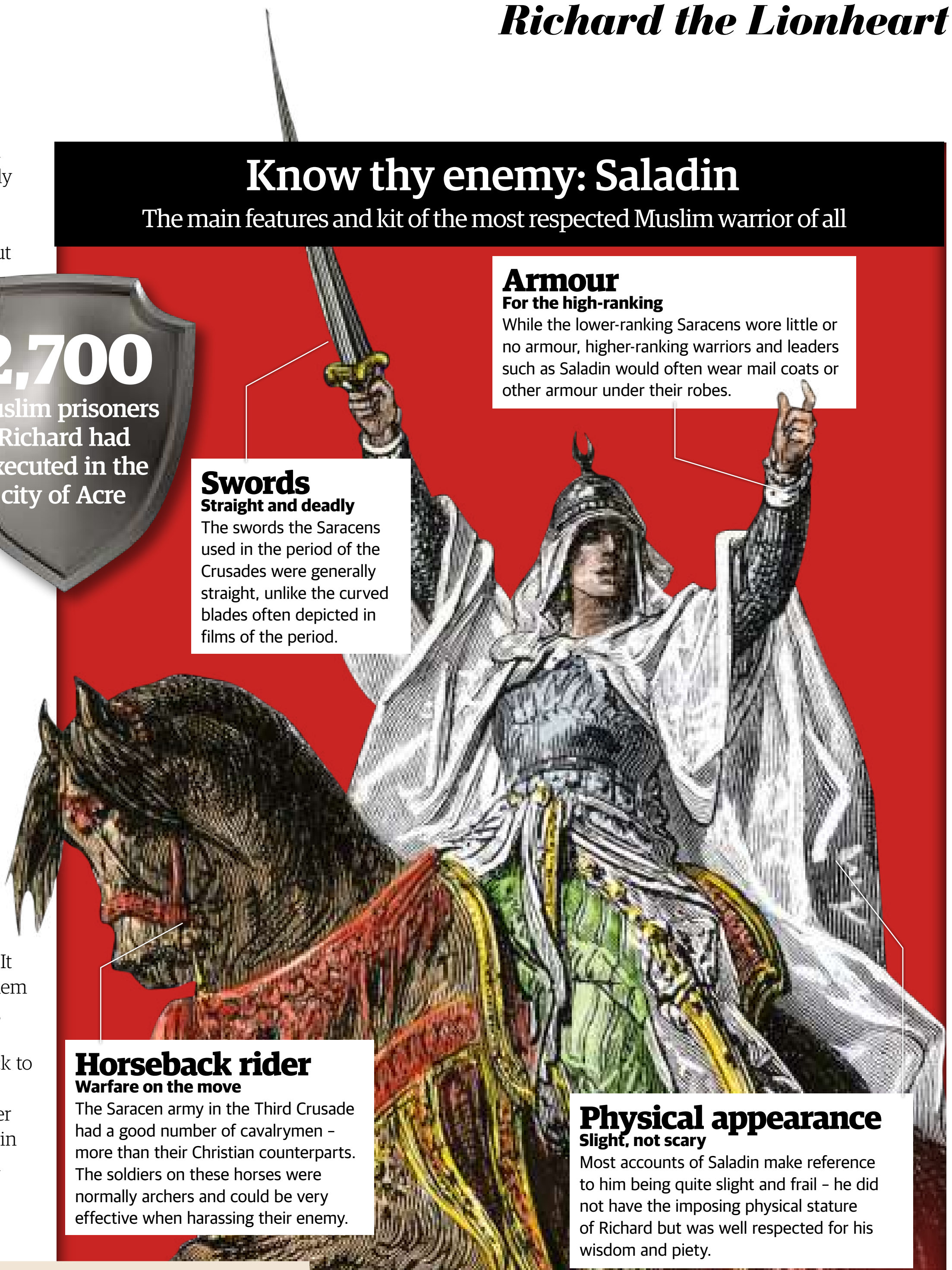
The invading army spent the rest of the winter months in Ascalon before continuing hostilities in the spring of 1192. Saladin, who had been forced by his emirs (commanders) to disband much of what was left of his army – the emirs favouring consolidation rather than open hostilities –

2,700
Muslim prisoners Richard had executed in the city of Acre

The modern-day city of Jerusalem

Know thy enemy: Saladin

The main features and kit of the most respected Muslim warrior of all



Armour
For the high-ranking
While the lower-ranking Saracens wore little or no armour, higher-ranking warriors and leaders such as Saladin would often wear mail coats or other armour under their robes.

Swords
Straight and deadly
The swords the Saracens used in the period of the Crusades were generally straight, unlike the curved blades often depicted in films of the period.

Horseback rider
Warfare on the move
The Saracen army in the Third Crusade had a good number of cavalrymen – more than their Christian counterparts. The soldiers on these horses were normally archers and could be very effective when harassing their enemy.

Physical appearance
Slight, not scary
Most accounts of Saladin make reference to him being quite slight and frail – he did not have the imposing physical stature of Richard but was well respected for his wisdom and piety.

Salāh ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (Saladin) was the first sultan of Egypt and Syria, and the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty. He was elevated to this lofty position through a series of military victories, first under the Fatimid government and then his own leadership, with him overseeing the decisive Battle of Hattin in 1187. It was due to Saladin himself that the Third Crusade was instigated, with the fallout from the Battle of Hattin and the fall of Jerusalem leading to the famous 'Saladin tithe', a tax levied in England and some parts of France to finance an army that was capable of reclaiming the holy territory.

Despite Saladin and Richard's armies clashing multiple times during the Third Crusade, the two men famously shared a more complicated relationship than would have been expected, with great respect reported on both sides. After the Battle of Arsuf – a battle in which Saladin's army was soundly beaten – Saladin sent Richard two excellent horses as Richard had lost his own in the battle. The two men never met in person, though, and Saladin died a year after the Third Crusade, struck down by a fever while staying in Damascus.

launched no major attack. However, bands of Saracen troops constantly plagued the crusaders, with a series of small fights and skirmishes slowly eroding the crusader army's numbers and morale. This came to a head on 22 May when the fortified town of Darum fell to the crusader forces after five days of bloody fighting. The crusaders had won great battles in the Holy Land but no more armies were journeying across the Mediterranean to bolster their forces; those men who fell in battle weren't going to be replaced. Richard's crusade was faltering, its primary purpose slipping away like sand in an hourglass.

2,000
Christian soldiers fought in the Third Crusade's last battle at Jaffa

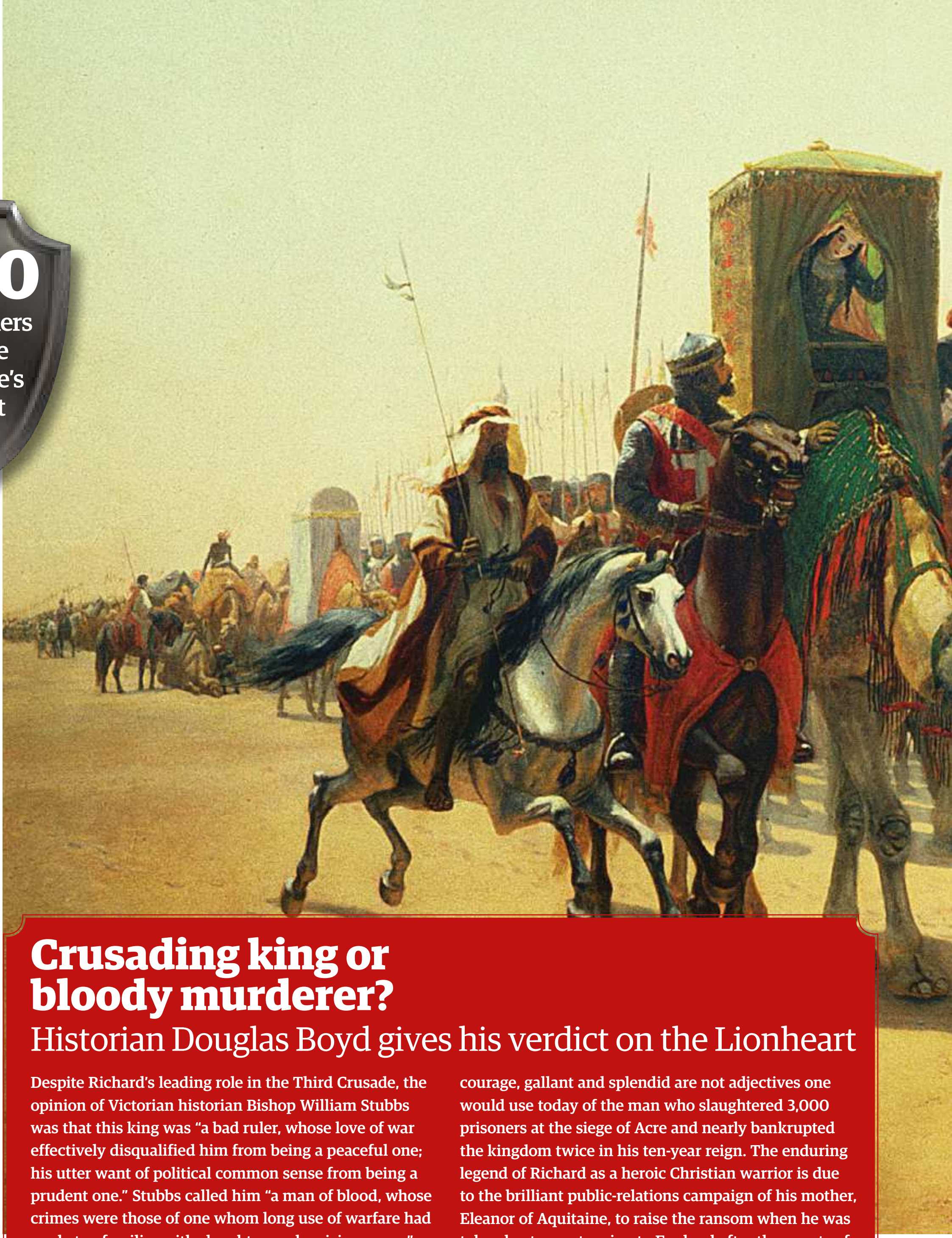
The crusading king of England managed to marshal his remaining forces together for one last advance on Jerusalem, marching inland in June of that year. This time, far from being checked at Beit Nuba, the crusaders actually came within sight of the hallowed city. The time, it appeared, had finally come. Richard was to return Jesus's city to its rightful owners and reinstate Christianity as the dominant religious and military power in the Holy Land. However, as the tired, dusty and bronzed warriors stood there watching the distant city from afar, once more the poison of dissent started to seep among its leaders.

Despite standing before the city, months of resentment over the course the Crusade had taken boiled over among the military commanders, with debate over the best military course of action descending into personal attacks and squabbles. The majority of the leaders, including Richard, believed the best way to take Jerusalem was not to besiege it but to attack Saladin directly in Egypt, thereby forcing him to relinquish it of his own free will as a bargaining chip to prevent his own fall. However, the leader of the surviving French crusaders, the Duke of Burgundy Hugh III, believed the only course of action was an immediate and direct assault on the city. News of the split in the leaders' plans filtered down to the crusaders, with the knights and soldiers now breaking previous allegiances and siding with one side or the other, splitting the crusader army in two.

Neither of the two forces were now powerful enough to assault a city, let alone Jerusalem, and as such Richard was forced to order a retreat. While progressing back towards the coast, angry with the French, Richard decided to return to England. However, just as he was approaching Jaffa, news arrived via a scout that the city had fallen to Saladin, who had personally overseen the assault. Furthermore, the scout reported that the lives of all the people there were under a very real threat as the Muslim ruler had lost control of his army, the thousands of Muslim soldiers driven berserk due to the massacre at Acre.

With the lives of the surviving crusaders very firmly in his hands - after all, it had been Richard who ordered the Acre executions - a return to England would have to wait. With a band of 2,000 surviving knights and soldiers, Richard launched one final assault on Saladin, approaching Jaffa by sea in a surprise attack. The Ayyubid soldiers who had only just taken the city were completely unprepared for the attack and were soon overrun, with a combination of knights and crusader crossbowmen decisively breaking their resistance. The attack was so brutally effective that Saladin was forced to flee from Jaffa to the south.

This would be the final battle of the Crusade for Saladin and Richard. Following Jaffa's second fall, the region entered a limbo-like stasis, with the Christian crusaders and Muslim Ayyubids sapped of any further willpower for bloodshed. The fighting had gone on for three years, and large parts of the historic area lay in ruins. Tens of thousands of men, women and children had lost their lives and, despite some areas of the Levant changing hands, nothing had really changed. Jerusalem remained under Muslim control, Saladin was ruler of the Ayyubid Empire, and Richard the Lionheart was still the fierce warrior king with a renowned reputation in Europe without a firm foothold in the Holy Land. What had changed, though, was Saladin and Richard's desire for more war and bloodshed, and so a treaty soon followed. Jerusalem would remain under Muslim control but from now on, Christian pilgrims and traders would



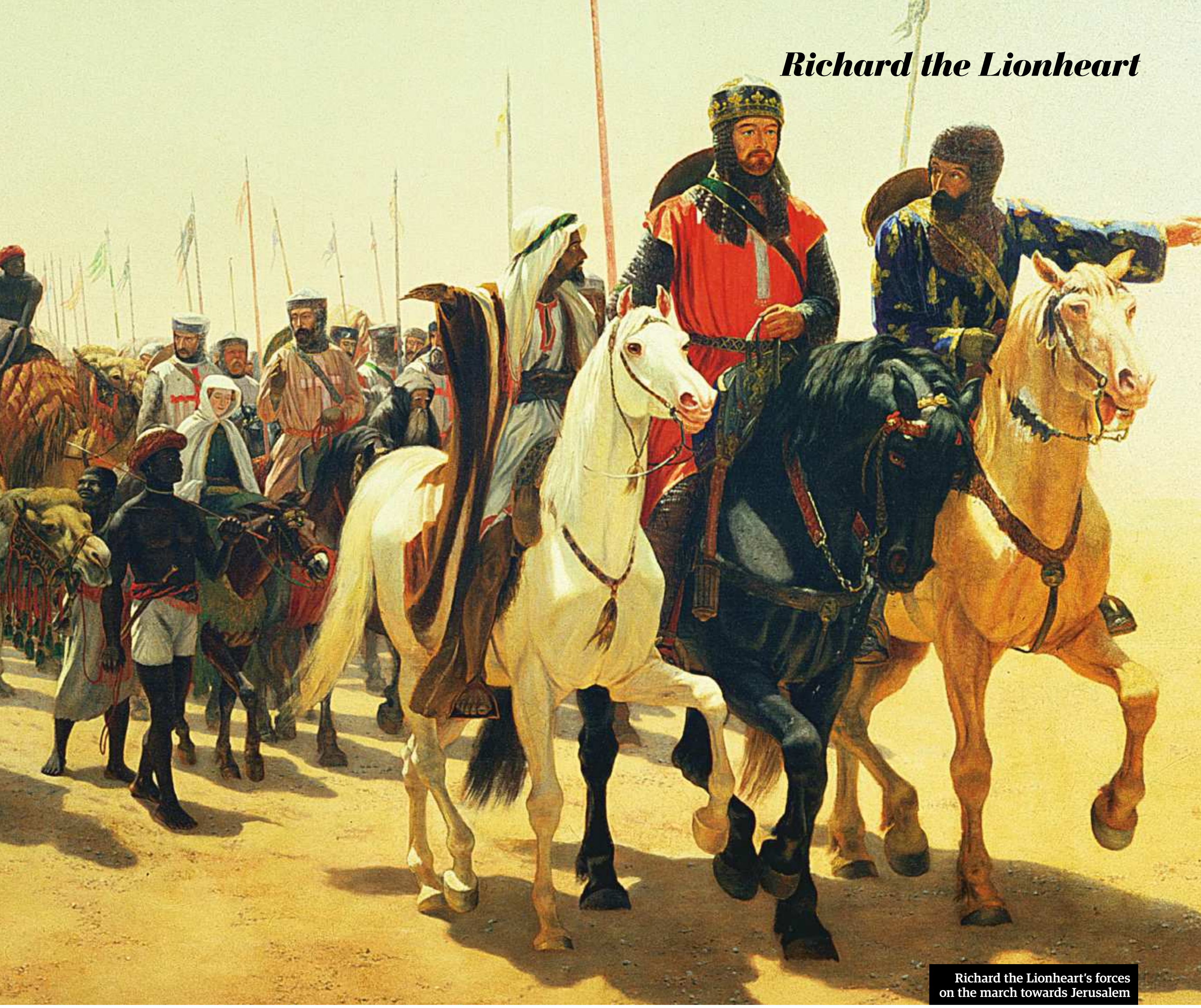
Crusading king or bloody murderer?

Historian Douglas Boyd gives his verdict on the Lionheart

Despite Richard's leading role in the Third Crusade, the opinion of Victorian historian Bishop William Stubbs was that this king was "a bad ruler, whose love of war effectively disqualified him from being a peaceful one; his utter want of political common sense from being a prudent one." Stubbs called him "a man of blood, whose crimes were those of one whom long use of warfare had made too familiar with slaughter, and a vicious man."

Respected historian of the crusades Sir Steven Runciman balanced the two sides of Richard's character: "He was a bad son, a bad husband and a bad king, but a gallant and splendid soldier." While Richard consistently displayed supreme physical courage, gallant and splendid are not adjectives one would use today of the man who slaughtered 3,000 prisoners at the siege of Acre and nearly bankrupted the kingdom twice in his ten-year reign. The enduring legend of Richard as a heroic Christian warrior is due to the brilliant public-relations campaign of his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, to raise the ransom when he was taken hostage returning to England after the events of the Third Crusade.

Douglas Boyd is the author of *Lionheart: The True Story Of England's Crusading King*, published by The History Press.



Richard the Lionheart's forces on the march towards Jerusalem

be permitted to visit the city, with their rights protected by law.

For Richard, the treaty was to be his last act in the Holy Land and the final curtain for the Third Crusade, with the king setting out on his return to England immediately after. His return journey, though, would not be as straightforward as the one over, with a series of events leading to his own capture, temporary imprisonment and yet more battles. However, the war he would go down in history for was his quest for the Holy Land – a journey full of bloodshed, plunder and religious fanaticism, but little territorial success. It ensured his legacy would forever be debated between those who see him as a crusading Christian king and others who view him as an amoral, cold-blooded killer, a debate that still rages on today.

> "Richard believed the best way to take Jerusalem was not to besiege it but to attack Saladin directly in Egypt"

Why was Jerusalem so sought after?

The geographical region of Palestine, between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, was referred to as the Holy Land by Christians and Muslims alike. Both religions claimed ownership due to an association with their faith, with the city of Jerusalem held in particular esteem. Both Islam and Christianity were Abrahamic monotheistic religions and as such, both sides considered the other to be unbelievers in the one true god and considered their presence heretical.

By the Third Crusade, Jerusalem and large parts of Palestine and the Levant region had changed hands again and again, with conflicts destabilising the region. Richard, coming from the Christian West, therefore perceived the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin's forces in 1187 as a direct attack on his faith. From Saladain's point of view, he was merely taking back the spiritual heartland of his own faith; one that had previously rested in the hands of infidels.

17

Months Richard the Lionheart remained in the Holy Land

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Influential grand masters

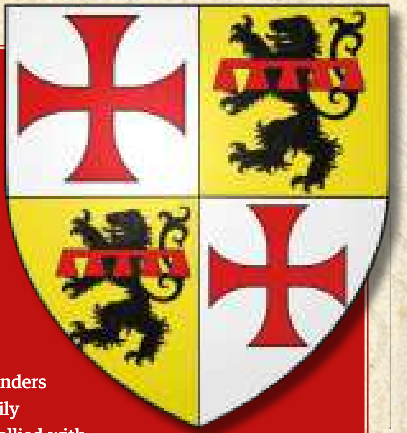
Answering only to the Holy See in Rome, the grand masters of the Knights Templar shaped the world of the Middle Ages

Written by Mike Haskew

Guillaume de Beaujeu

Lived: 1230-1291 **Nationality:** French

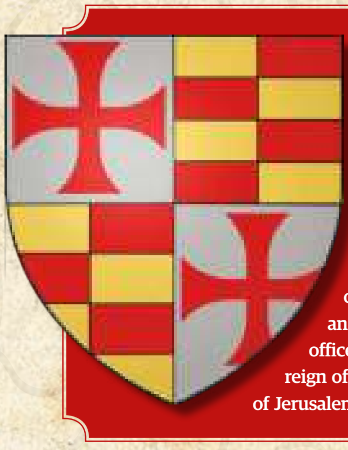
Last leader of the Knights Templar in the Holy Land



By the time Guillaume de Beaujeu was elected grand master in 1273, he was a veteran of the fighting in the Holy Land while well aware of the intrigue and difficulties among Christian factions in the West. Guillaume had been captured in battle in 1261, ransomed, and later served as precept of the County of Tripoli, master of the province of Apulia, and preceptor of the Kingdom of Sicily. Closely associated with the French monarchy, it is these ties that most likely facilitated his elevation to grand master.

Guillaume's uncle had fought alongside King Louis XI in Egypt, and he was related to the Capetian royal family and Charles I of Anjou, king of Sicily. After his election, Guillaume travelled through Spain, France and England raising funds and recruiting men to the Templars. He attended the Second Council of Lyons convened by Pope Gregory X in 1274, and urged that the Crusaders build a fleet of their own ships so they were not dependent on Genoese and Venetian merchants for transportation to the Holy Land, asserting that these men were interested only in profiting from trade with the Muslims.

When Sultan Qalawun became aggressive in the Holy Land, Guillaume warned the people of Tripoli that an attack was imminent; however, the city fell to the Muslims. Guillaume further warned Acre, but again the message was unheeded. When the siege came, Guillaume fought valiantly, leading a foray against the Muslim camp and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Although the defenders of Acre were heavily outnumbered, he allied with the Hospitallers and pushed the Muslims back from St Anthony's Gate. When Muslim engineers undermined the walls of the city and the ramparts began to collapse, Guillaume counterattacked at the Accursed Tower, where he was severely wounded. A hero, he later died at the Templar fortress on the coast, and Acre fell to the Muslims in 1291.

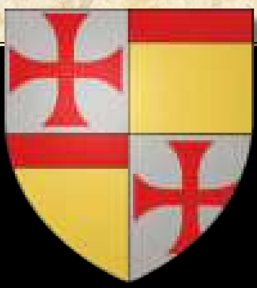


Bertrand de Blanquefort

Lived: 1109-1169 **Nationality:** French

Introduced revisions to the Knights Templars' Rule

Bertrand de Blanquefort presided as the sixth grand master of the Knights Templar, and was elected to the office in 1156 during the reign of Baldwin III, king of Jerusalem. Blanquefort campaigned with Baldwin against Sultan Nur ed-Din of Damascus and was captured in 1159 after an ambush by Muslim troops that took place in the Jordan Valley. He was held for three years and released after the intervention of the Byzantines, who allied with Nu red-Din against the Turks. Amalric I, successor to Baldwin, declined Blanquefort's advice to form an alliance with Egypt, launching an attack instead. Blanquefort participated but refused to allow Templar involvement in the last campaign against the Egyptians, believing it would violate a truce. During his term as grand master, Blanquefort initiated revisions to the Templars' Rule, adding regulations dealing with the military and a hierarchy of the order. The original Rule had dealt primarily with the monastic life.



Bernard de Tremelay

Lived: ?-1153 **Nationality:** French

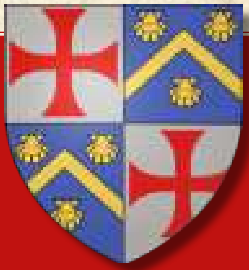
An ambitious warrior, grand master Bernard de Tremelay paid with his life

The fourth grand master of the Knights Templar, Bernard de Tremelay was born in Burgundy near the town of Dijon, but the exact date of his birth is unknown. He acceded to the office of grand master in June 1151, and led the order following the disastrous repulse of the Second Crusade. Bernard was granted the town of Gaza in Egypt by King Baldwin III of Jerusalem, and rebuilt the city as a stronghold of the Knights Templar.

In 1153, Bernard joined the king in an assault against the Egyptian fortress at Ascalon, laying siege to the Muslim fortification on 23 January of that year. Bernard ordered a wooden siege engine to be constructed, and the apparatus was pushed forward to the ramparts, where it caught fire during the battle.

As the siege engine burned furiously, the wind changed and also caused a portion of the Egyptian defensive walls to catch fire and collapse. Historian William of Tyre recounts a reckless rush of the Templars through the breach on 15 August, and asserts that the king was unaware of the attack. At the same time, Bernard kept other Crusaders from following them into the fortress, and William writes that his motive was to avoid sharing the plunder with Baldwin III.

The advance was ill-advised, and Bernard and 40 Knights Templar were beheaded, their bodies hung from the ramparts by the Egyptians the following day. Their severed heads were sent to the Muslim sultan as a tribute. Baldwin persisted and eventually captured Ascalon. William of Tyre is known to have often disparaged the Knights Templar, and other historical accounts make no mention of the incident involving Bernard's greed and rush to his doom. Nevertheless, he lost his life in the battle and was succeeded as grand master by André de Montbard.



Everard des Barres

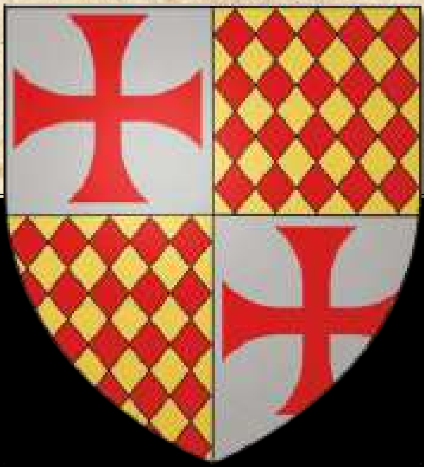
Lived: 1113-1174 **Nationality:** French

One of the highest dignitaries of the order when Robert de Craon died

Known for his bravery and piety, Everard des Barres was serving as preceptor of the Knights Templar in France when he was elected grand master in 1147. Shortly after his election, he travelled to the Holy Land with King Louis VII of France during the Second Crusade, following a large gathering of 120 Templars, the king and Pope Eugenius III in Paris. It is believed that the Templars were given the right to wear the red cross of martyrdom on their robes at this meeting.

Everard was sent ahead to Constantinople, where he met with Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus. During a battle with the Turks in Pisidia, he saved King Louis' life.

After the inglorious end of the Second Crusade, Everard returned to France. Apparently overcome with guilt, he resigned the office of grand master amid the protests of the majority of the Templars, and joined the Cistercian order at Clairvaux around 1351, living the remainder of his life as a monk.



Robert de Craon

Lived: 1109-1169

Nationality: French

Papal recognition brought an extension of powers to the Knights Templar

Although he was known as 'the Burgundian' Craon was born in the French province of Anjou. He rose to become second grand master of the Knights Templar in 1136 after serving as seneschal of the order, second only to grand master Hugues de Payens. Craon was a member of the nobility, and was once engaged to the heiress of Chabannes and Confolens in Aquitaine; however, he renounced the betrothal, travelled to the Holy Land, and joined the Knights Templar in about 1125. Craon was serving as grand master when Pope Innocent II issued his papal bull titled *Omne datum optimum*, granting extensive privileges to the Knights Templar. He participated in several campaigns in the Holy Land and returned to the West in 1138. Historian William of Tyre, often critical of the Knights Templar, presented a quite favourable assessment of Robert's tenure as grand master. He served until his death in 1149.

Thibaud Gaudin

Lived: 1229-1292 **Nationality:** French

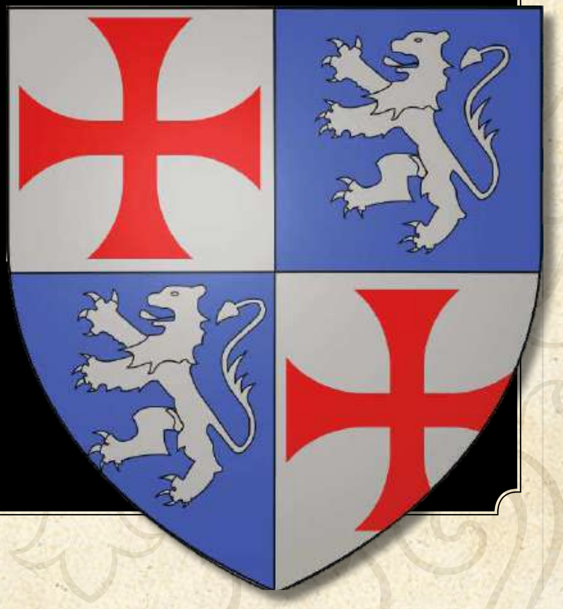
Saviour of relics and the Templar treasury during the flight from Acre

Thibuad Gaudin was the 22nd of the 23 grand masters of the Knights Templar. Although little is known of his career prior to the year 1260, he was captured about that time along with another future grand master, Guillaume de Beaujeu, during an ill-advised raid against the Muslims in northern Galilee. Along with Guillaume, he was released after a high ransom was paid to the captors.

Born in the Ile-de-France, an area that is known to have supplied many members of the Knights Templar, Gaudin returned to France in 1279 and was subsequently named turcopolier and then grand preceptor of Acre in 1283. During his tenure, he attempted to quell a disagreement among Pisan and Genoese contingents in the city. He further prevented a group of Pisan sailors from being sold into slavery. Both Guillaume de Beaujeu and Peter de Sevrey, marshal of the Templars, were killed in the decisive fighting at Acre.

Three days before the fall of the final Templar fortress in Acre in 1291, Thibaud escaped the city and sailed to Sidon, safeguarding the order's treasury and some of its revered relics. Within weeks, it became apparent that Sidon could not be defended against the Muslims. Thibaud decided to withdraw from the city to the Castle of the Sea, and evacuated his forces to the safer location. Some observers considered the movement to be an act of cowardice.

Thibaud then fled from the area of Sidon to the island of Cyprus. Although he originally intended to return to Sidon with reinforcements, this hope was dashed with reports of Muslim strength and the sad state of his own command. Thibaud reached the fortress of Sayette on Cyprus and was elected grand master there in August 1291 until his death only eight months later. He was succeeded by Jacques de Molay, the last Templar grand master.



Robert de Sable

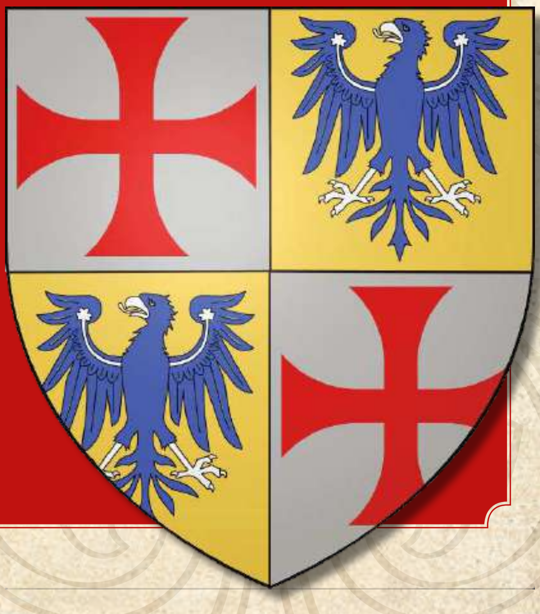
Lived: 1150-1193

Nationality: French

Cyprus becomes territory of the Knights Templar under Robert de Sable

Robert de Sable, 11th grand master of the Knights Templar, fought under King Richard the Lionheart during the Third Crusade, commanded the king's fleet, and became a close confidante and vassal of the monarch. A widower who was born in Anjou, Sable was elected grand master with the support of King Richard in 1191, although he was not a member of the order when his predecessor, Gerard de Ridefort, was captured and beheaded by the Muslims. At the time of his election, Sable had been a Templar for less than a year.

At the end of 1191, King Richard sold the island of Cyprus to Sable and the Knights Templar, who anticipated the formation of their own country and considerable profits from the island's commercial potential. Sable failed to fully establish Templar bases on Cyprus, and the conduct of the Templars led to poor relations with the civilian population of the island. Sable died in the Holy Land in 1193.



Thomas Berard

Lived: ?-1273

Nationality: French

Raising the alarm in the West as the situation in the Holy Land deteriorated

Elected the 20th grand master of the Knights Templar in 1256, Thomas Berard wrote numerous letters to King Henry III of England, describing the desperate situation in the Holy Land, and worked to cooperate with the Knights Hospitaller and the Teutonic Knights following a lengthy period of rivalry between the three orders. Berard's letters described a series of setbacks suffered by the Templars and others at the hands of the Muslims. During the turbulent period, the Mamluks under Baibers, Sultan of Cairo, besieged the Templar fortress at Safed and beheaded all their captives when the Templars refused to convert to Islam. The city of Antioch also fell, along with Montfort, the last Christian fortress in the interior of the Holy Land.

Berard also wrote to the Pope for assistance, and the Eighth Crusade was organised in response. His warning that the Mongols were advancing steadily through the Middle East included descriptions of their atrocities. He died in 1273.

Reynaud de Vichiers

Lived: ?-1256 **Nationality:** French

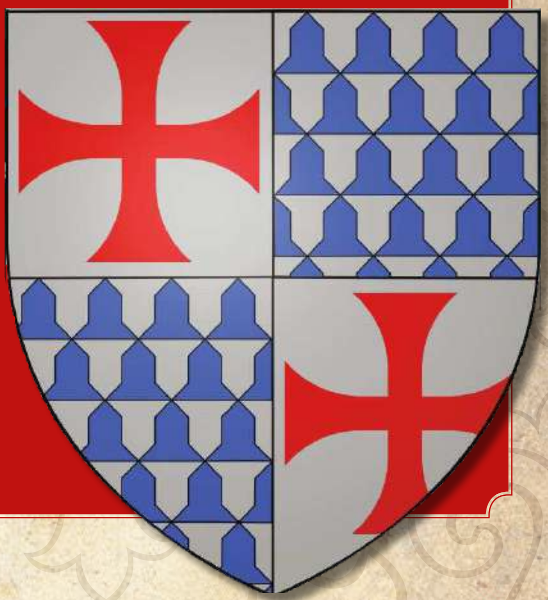
Friendship and a quarrel with the French king marked a turbulent tenure

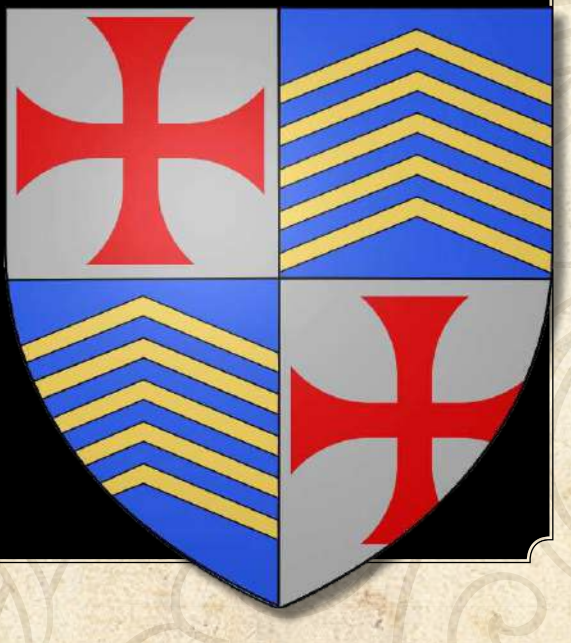
When Guillaume de Sonnac, grand master of the Templars, was killed in battle against the Muslims at al Mansurah during the Seventh Crusade, Reynaud de Vichiers, a close friend of King Louis IX of France, was elected as Sonnac's successor with the hearty endorsement of the monarch. Vichiers joined the Knights Templar in 1240 and was elevated to preceptor of Acre in the same year. He served as marshal of the Templars from 1242 to 1249.

While King Louis prepared his army for the Seventh Crusade, he relied heavily on Vichiers to arrange the provisioning and transportation of the troops. During the ensuing fighting, Vichiers proved himself a great warrior, but during a march from Damietta he is said to have violated an order of the king to remain in ranks. As the Templars advanced, a Muslim warrior felled a Templar with a strong blow from a battle axe, and the wounded man tumbled beneath the hooves of Vichiers' horse. The Marshal had enough. "At them in the name of God, for I cannot longer stand this!" he bellowed. Leading the advance, Vichiers turned his wrath on the Muslims, and not a single enemy warrior escaped with his life.

From Egypt, the Knights Templar and the king's army retired to Acre, where Vichiers was elected grand master in 1250 and became the godfather of the son of Louis and Marguerite of Provence. Their close friendship, however, ruptured when Templar marshal Hugues de Jouy led a diplomatic mission to the Muslims in Damascus. Louis was enraged, and asserted that the Templars had overstepped their diplomatic bounds. Jouy was banished from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and Vichiers was forced to kneel before the king and apologise for the overreach. From that time, Louis worked to curb the political and diplomatic influence of the Templars.

Vichiers retired from the Knights Templar in 1252 and died in a monastery four years later.





Known for his impetuous bravery on the battlefield, Gerard de Ridefort's courage led to the deaths of many Templars and his own

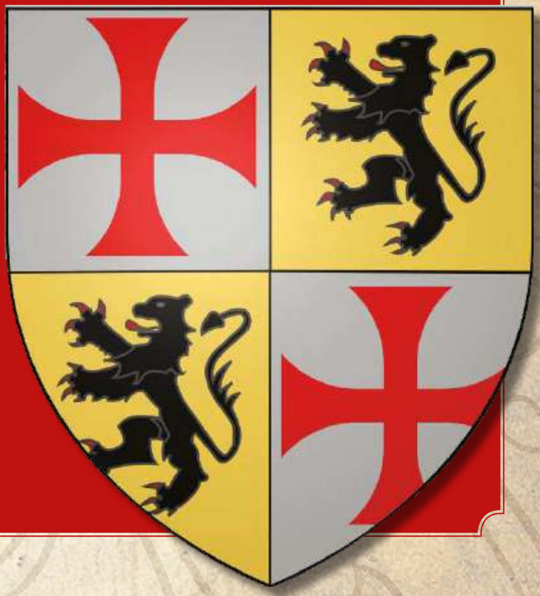
Gerard de Ridefort

Lived: ?-1189

Nationality: Frankish

Gerard de Ridefort was the lone Templar to survive the Battle of Hattin

Probably born in Flanders, Gerard de Ridefort supported Count Raymond III of Tripoli and became marshal of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the 1170s. However, after the count reneged on a promise to make the heiress of Botron Gerard's bride, Gerard joined the Templars around 1180. He became seneschal in 1183 and was elected grand master the following year. In May 1187, he joined Roger of Les Moulins in battle against Saladin and the Muslims at the Springs of Cresson. Gerard was one of three Knights Templar to survive the defeat. By the end of the year, Saladin launched an invasion of Galilee. Gerard, known for his arrogance and overconfidence, provided unwise counsel to King Guy, leading to the disastrous defeat at the Battle of Hattin in July. Gerard was the only Templar to survive and was later ransomed. He joined Guy in the siege of Acre and was captured and beheaded in October 1189.



Rival orders

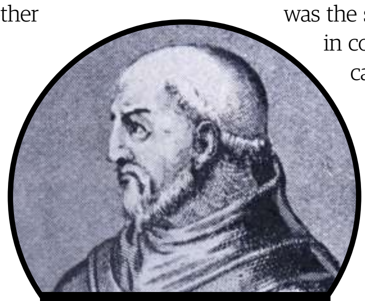
The Knights Templar shared common hierarchies and purposes with other orders such as the Hospitallers, but they eventually became rivals, actually fighting one another

Written by Mike Haskew

Before and during the Crusades, numerous religious and military orders were founded in Europe and the Holy Land. Three of these, the Knights Templar, Knights Hospitaller, and the Teutonic Knights, remain the best known. Each was established in response to a perceived need to help others, either in the vanquishing of the foes of Christianity; in assisting the poor, sick, and forgotten; or those pilgrims seeking a religious awakening during the trek of their lifetime to the Holy Land, once off limits due to Muslim control.

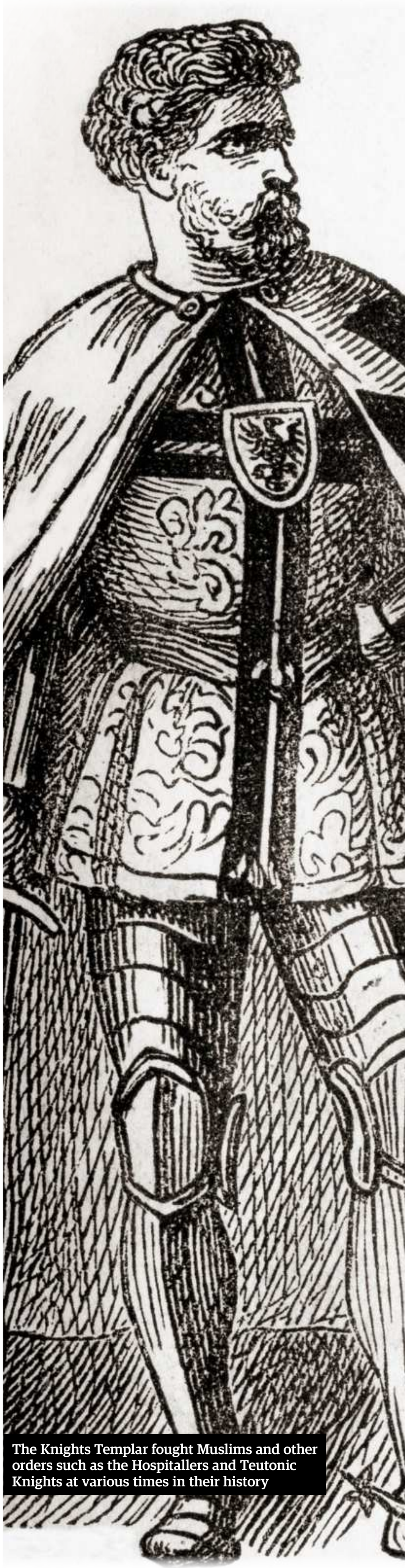
Despite their complementary and erstwhile noble reasons for existence, these orders found themselves at odds with one another from time to time, disagreeing on points of purpose, accusing another of having lost their way, and sometimes pointing to the accumulation of wealth as having eclipsed the true Christian premise that supposedly underpinned all of their functions. Although each was nominally subordinate to the Pope and charged by the Roman Catholic Church in the performance of its work, the orders became rivals as land holdings and political realities came into conflict.

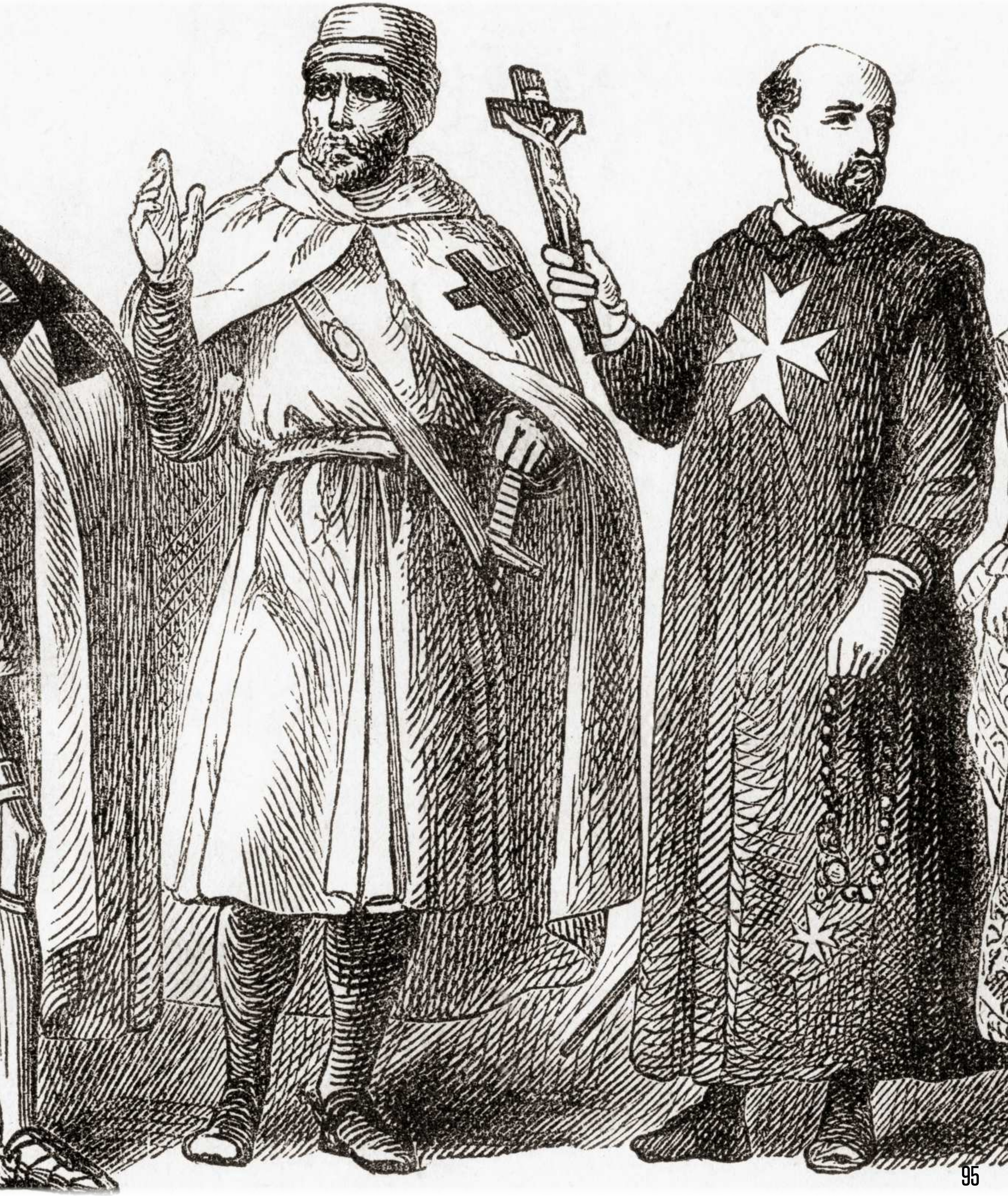
The Knights Templar, founded in 1119 by French knight Hugues de Payens, was organised as a military order with the responsibility of offering protection to pilgrims travelling from Europe to the Holy Land. The trek was long and perilous, and these travellers were often set upon by bandits and robbers as they made their way to Jerusalem from the coast of the Eastern Mediterranean. In 1139, Pope Innocent II issued the papal bull *Omne datum optimum*, sanctioning the order, formally known as the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon. Under the patronage of King Baldwin II of Jerusalem and Warmund, Patriarch of Jerusalem, the monastic order was given a headquarters on the city's Temple Mount.

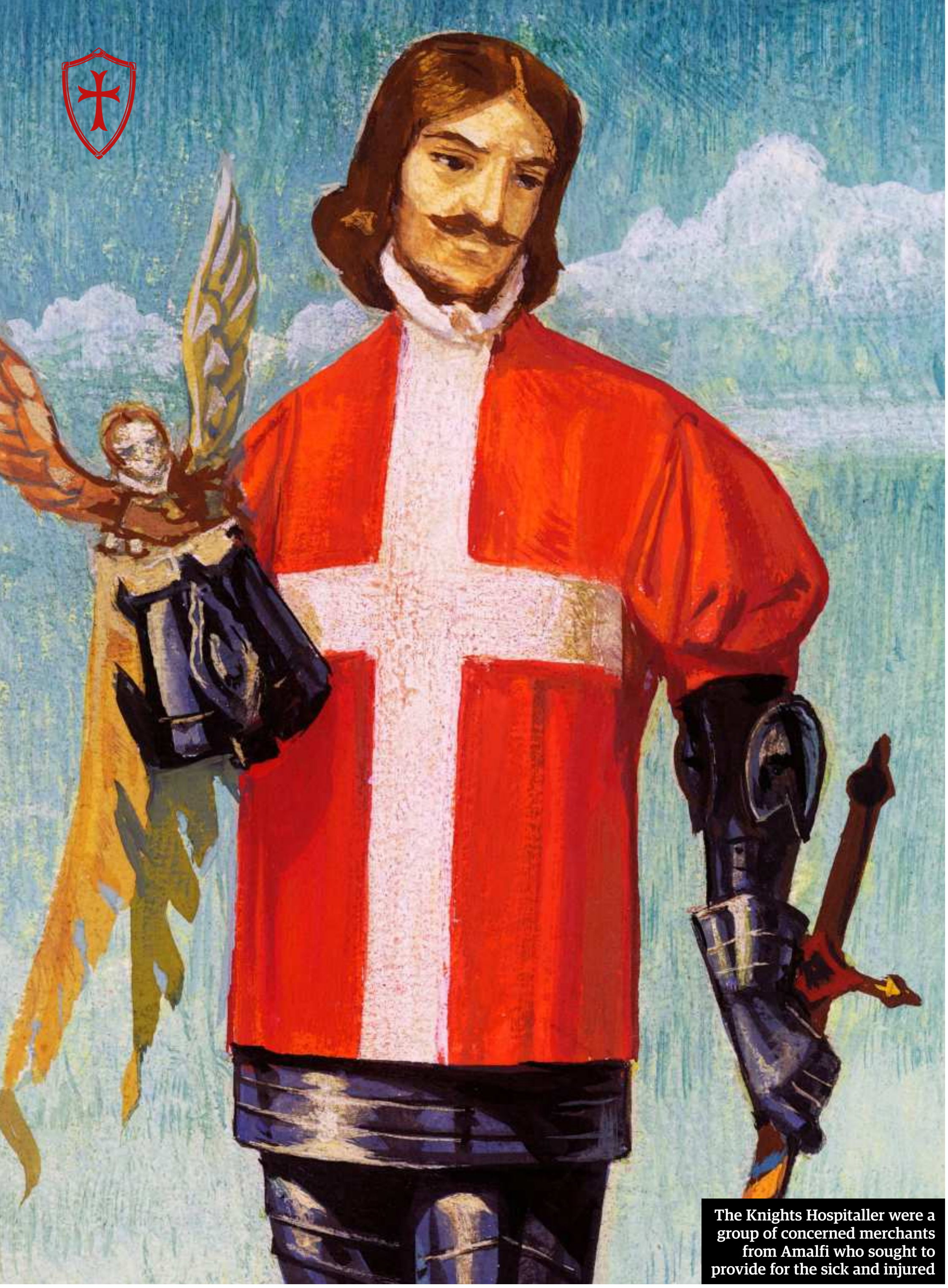

A papal bull from Pope Innocent II gave the Knights Templar sweeping authority to implement its mission across the known world

The established Templar hierarchy facilitated its activities. At the apex, the grand master was the supreme authority. His administrative second was the seneschal, while the marshal was in command of military and related campaigns, the standard bearer was overseer of the squires (orderlies who supported the knights), and the draper cared for linens and clothing. At the top of the Templar fighting ranks, the knights were always noblemen fitted as heavy cavalry and accompanied by two squires and three or four horses. The sergeants were tradesmen with essential skills such as blacksmithing, who fought as light cavalry. Chaplains were ordained priests who took care of the spiritual requirements of the knights.

During the course of the Crusades, the Knights Templar established themselves not only as an elite fighting force that was much in demand, but also


The Knights Templar fought Muslims and other orders such as the Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights at various times in their history





The Knights Hospitaller were a group of concerned merchants from Amalfi who sought to provide for the sick and injured

as a charity. The Templars became quite wealthy and founded a system of finance and banking that survives in modern form today. Their vast wealth was a source of pride and stability but it also drew criticism from others within and outside the Christian fold.

After establishing a headquarters in Paris, the order met its demise in the early 14th century at the hands of French King Philip IV and Pope Clement V. Perhaps it is the nature of the Templars' end, shrouded in intrigue, false accusation and murder, that has made the order the stuff of legend. The Knights Templar continues to live on in popular literature and imagination.

The Knights Hospitaller, the oldest of the three prominent charitable and military orders, came into being circa 1070 at the Hospital of St John in Jerusalem. They were a group of concerned merchants from the Italian city of Amalfi who sought to provide for the sick and injured. Officially known as the Knights of the Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, the Knights Hospitaller established facilities to care for men and women (separately) under the auspices of the Latin Church of Santa Maria Latina in Jerusalem and the Benedictine Order.

In 1113, Pope Paschal II issued a papal bull titled Pie Postulatio Voluntatis, formally recognising the Knights Hospitaller as a religious order under its first master, Blessed Gerard. Within a decade, even as the Hospitallers expanded to operate most of the hospitals in the Holy Land, master Raymond du Puy reorganised the order along more militaristic lines. From du Puy's initiative, the Hospitallers grew into a well-trained combat force that participated in numerous engagements during the Crusades.

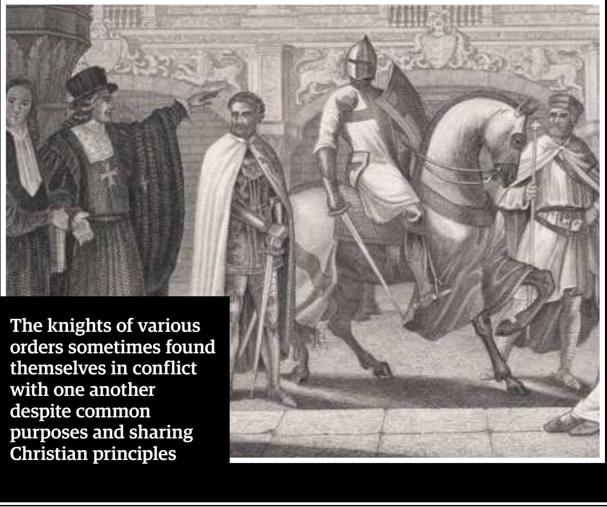
The leader of the Knights Hospitaller, the master, was elected by a council of knights and served for life, just as the Templar grand master did. The grand commander was in charge of weapons, supplies, and administration. The marshal maintained discipline and led military campaigns. The constable commanded the knights and hired mercenaries in the field, while the admiral was in charge of the

Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights feud

Right from their inception, the Teutonic Knights found themselves in a conflict with the Knights Hospitaller that lasted decades. Under the mistaken impression that the Teutonic Knights had been organised in a hospital in Jerusalem over which they had jurisdiction, the Knights Hospitaller demanded control of the order.

The dispute began in 1190 and did not conclude until 1231, and oddly enough it came to an end when the Hospitallers asked the Teutonic Knights to serve as negotiators on their behalf in another legal disagreement in Italy. Once this second dispute was settled with the help of the Teutonic Knights, the Hospitallers apparently dropped their claim and the two orders cooperated with one another. They sided together against the Knights Templar on more than one occasion, participated in future negotiations for each another, and even guarded the properties and possessions of the other order as the need arose. Other divided loyalties resulted in knights of opposing orders throwing their military support to one leader or another in European wars.

While numerous other military and religious orders were formed during the Middle Ages and the era of the Crusades, they rarely became embroiled in the quarrels that sometimes surfaced between the larger orders of the day.



The knights of various orders sometimes found themselves in conflict with one another despite common purposes and sharing Christian principles order's ships. The master esquire was responsible for all horses, and the gonfalonier served as standard bearer, while castellans were castle administrators. Among other administrators were the hospitaller, who was in charge of all such facilities, the treasurer, and conventual prior, the senior religious figure of the order.

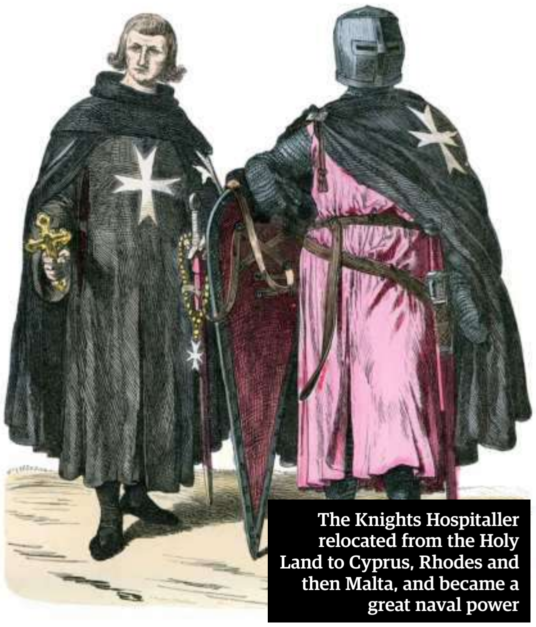
The Hospitallers fled the Holy Land for Cyprus after the Fall of Acre in 1291 and temporarily coexisted alongside the Templars. Soon, however, they moved their administrative seat to the island of Rhodes and then later to the island of Malta. They grew into a substantial naval power and gained wealth through the exercise of trade and commerce authority in the Mediterranean. At various times during their history, the Hospitallers have also been known as the Knights of Rhodes and the Knights of Malta. When the Templars were eventually disbanded, the Hospitallers received much of their territorial holdings.

The Teutonic Knights, a Germanic order, was founded in a field hospital at Acre during the Third Crusade, circa 1190, when merchants from the cities of Lübeck and Bremen formed a fraternity to help the sick and wounded. The Brethren of the German Hospital of St Mary was recognised as a military order by Popes Celestine III and Innocent III, as several German knights and noblemen along with King Amalric II of Jerusalem introduced a military mission to the Teutonic Knights. The new order was constituted with much the same hierarchy and administration as those of the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller, and its first grand master was Henry de Walpot.

Towards the end of the Crusades, the Teutonic Knights left the Holy Land and concentrated in eastern Europe. They benefited from extensive land grants, conducted profitable trade, received donations and leased land to farmers. The Teutonic Knights later campaigned in Prussia, Poland and the Baltic region, with headquarters in Venice and later Marienburg, Königsberg and Bad Mergentheim. The order survives today in a religious role.

Conflict became inherent in the missions and functions of the religious and knightly orders. Religious commitments often clashed with the functions of the orders as landlords, merchants, and secular administrators. Inevitably, the orders were embroiled in political and personal disputes. At times, there was dissent within the ranks as well, as knights disagreed with moral and administrative reforms that were initiated.

As early as 1197, the Templars and Hospitallers fought over the rights to a substantial estate in the coastal city of Tripoli. The two orders opposed one another during a conflict over the succession to the throne of Jerusalem. In 1241, half a century before the Christian departure from the Holy Land, the Knights Templar attacked the Hospitallers and the Teutonic Knights around Acre because of the latter's support for a treaty with Egypt. After Genoese and Venetian communities were established in the Holy Land, a property dispute that erupted between them triggered a war between 1256 and 1258, as the Templars supported Venice, and the Hospitallers backed Genoa.



The Knights Hospitaller relocated from the Holy Land to Cyprus, Rhodes and then Malta, and became a great naval power

The Knights Templar and the Hospitallers became bitter rivals on the island of Cyprus following the Fall of Acre. Each side accused the other of excesses, having turned away from its true purpose of serving God to become immersed in the tangle of worldly affairs and the corruption that so often follows financial gain and prosperity.

The Templar Castle of Almourol in Portugal was typical of the order's vast real estate holdings and network of strongpoints

KNIGHT · TEMPLAR
KNIGHT · HOSPITALL

The rival Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller are honoured side by side in this stained glass window

The Temple Church: London's Jerusalem

The Templars' headquarters in London is still one of the city's most peaceful havens, a hidden gem with the Templars' own church at its centre

Written by Robin Griffith-Jones

Right in the centre of London, between St Paul's Cathedral and Trafalgar Square and just off the hubbub of Fleet Street, is a lovely enclave of courtyards, fountains, gardens and ancient buildings. There are no cars; a visitor passing through the great gates from Fleet Street would be forgiven for thinking they had somehow been transported out of London and into a medieval campus. This is the Temple: the area once owned by the Knights Templar, as prestigious a venue 800 years ago as it is today, between the financial centre of the City of London and the Government in Westminster and Whitehall.

At its heart is Church Court, whose buildings are laid out on the same footprint that they bore in the 13th century: a courtyard with a large hall to the south, cloisters to the west, a priest's house to the east – and along its north side the Temple Church, as historic and beautiful a church as any in London. One half of the church is a classic Gothic chancel, a graceful oblong with tall, pointed tripartite windows. The other half is far more unexpected: a battlemented rotunda with narrow, sturdy windows and, for its entrance, a majestic Norman doorway elaborately carved in seven orders of decoration over its top and down each side.

The Templars were founded in Jerusalem, 1119-20. By the 1140s they were in London, at their first 'Temple', on Holborn. There too they built a round church. By 1162 they moved south to the present 'New Temple', between Fleet Street and the River Thames. Their new compound had its inner, consecrated courtyard with the church; and just to the west, an outer unconsecrated courtyard with a second hall, brewery, granaries, stables and the like. Their smithy was across Fleet Street, keeping the danger from its fires well away from the main buildings. Their jousting ground, Fittes Field, was also on the field north of Fleet Street. The site is now occupied by the Royal Courts of Justice, the principal law courts for England and Wales and the setting for jousts of a different kind.

ROBIN GRIFFITH-JONES

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The Templars pledged themselves to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land. The destination of every pilgrim – and in effect the centre of the world – was Jerusalem. Within Jerusalem, the centre of the world, the most sacred place of all was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the site of Jesus's death, burial and rising. This church had been built by the Emperor Constantine in the 320s CE. Its culminating glory was a vast rotunda built around the empty grave of Jesus. Over and around the grave itself and the stone ledge within it on which the body of Jesus had been laid, there was a small, free-standing chapel, the 'aedicule' or 'little house'.

When the Templars built their round churches, they were re-creating the shape and thereby the sanctity of the Holy Sepulchre. To be in the Temple's rotunda was, to the medieval mind, to be in Jerusalem, at the very place where Jesus – seemingly defeated at his crucifixion – won the ultimate victory over death, which he invited all his followers to share. We may need nowadays to stretch our imaginations if we are to sense how central the Sepulchre has always been to the Christian world. We know how powerful some places can be where events took place that still inform our world decades or centuries later: Gettysburg, for instance, or Churchill's War Rooms. In these cases, although the events are long past, their effects are still vividly with us. In the Sepulchre, by contrast, Christians are at the place where, deep down, the battle was won in which they themselves are still engaged: it is the site of Christ's victory over evil and death, and so of their own.

Many have been keen to know if Constantine's agents did in fact find the right grave of Jesus himself, in a quarry that was riddled with tombs. The pagan emperor Hadrian had in the 2nd century CE built a grand esplanade of temples on the site. The Christian community clearly knew that Constantine

The Temple Church: London's Jerusalem

was digging in the right area; Hadrian left a spur of uncut rock protruding from his esplanade, which might have been a lasting reminder. This spur is now, by long tradition, identified as the rock of Calvary. Archaeologists reckon that Constantine was, at the worst, only a few metres out in his identification of Christ's tomb and he may well have found the right one. The real Calvary, on the other hand, was probably some 45 metres further south than the famous spur.

We have, however, still not done justice to the Temple's rotunda in London. The Knights Templar were given their headquarters in Jerusalem by the king there: the al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount. The Mount is a huge platform, in part natural and in part man-made, on which the Jewish Temple had, in successive forms, been built. The Temple was last destroyed in 70 CE; it has never been rebuilt. The al-Aqsa Mosque was believed by the crusaders to have been the palace of King Solomon, Israel's greatest and wisest king in the *Hebrew Bible*. The mosque is aligned with the Dome of the Rock, just 91 metres to its east; this is the Muslim shrine of astonishing beauty whose copper dome, gleaming like gold, still dominates the skyline of Jerusalem. The crusaders identified the Dome as the Temple of Solomon or of his successors; at any event, it was thought to be the Temple in which the infant Jesus had been presented by his mother to the Lord at the first 'Candlemas'. The Dome became a church, dedicated by the Templars to the Virgin Mary.

The Dome itself had been built by 692 to outshine the Holy Sepulchre. It too was centrally planned: an octagon. The Templars in Jerusalem were confronted by two such centrally planned churches: the Dome of the Rock, linked with Jesus's

"To be in the Temple's rotunda was, to the medieval mind, to be in Jerusalem"

Knights in effigy: the slow march of time

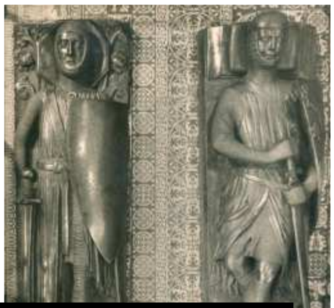
Honouring friends of the Templars

Nine stone effigies and one grave slab lie in the rotunda of the Temple Church. Until the Blitz in 1941, they were in strikingly fine condition. Even today, damaged and repaired, they are an imposing presence and testify to the power of the Templars here. One of them represents Geoffrey de Mandeville, who terrorised Essex in the Anarchy under King Stephen but was a friend of the Templars. When he died in 1144 he was excommunicate, and could not be buried in consecrated land.

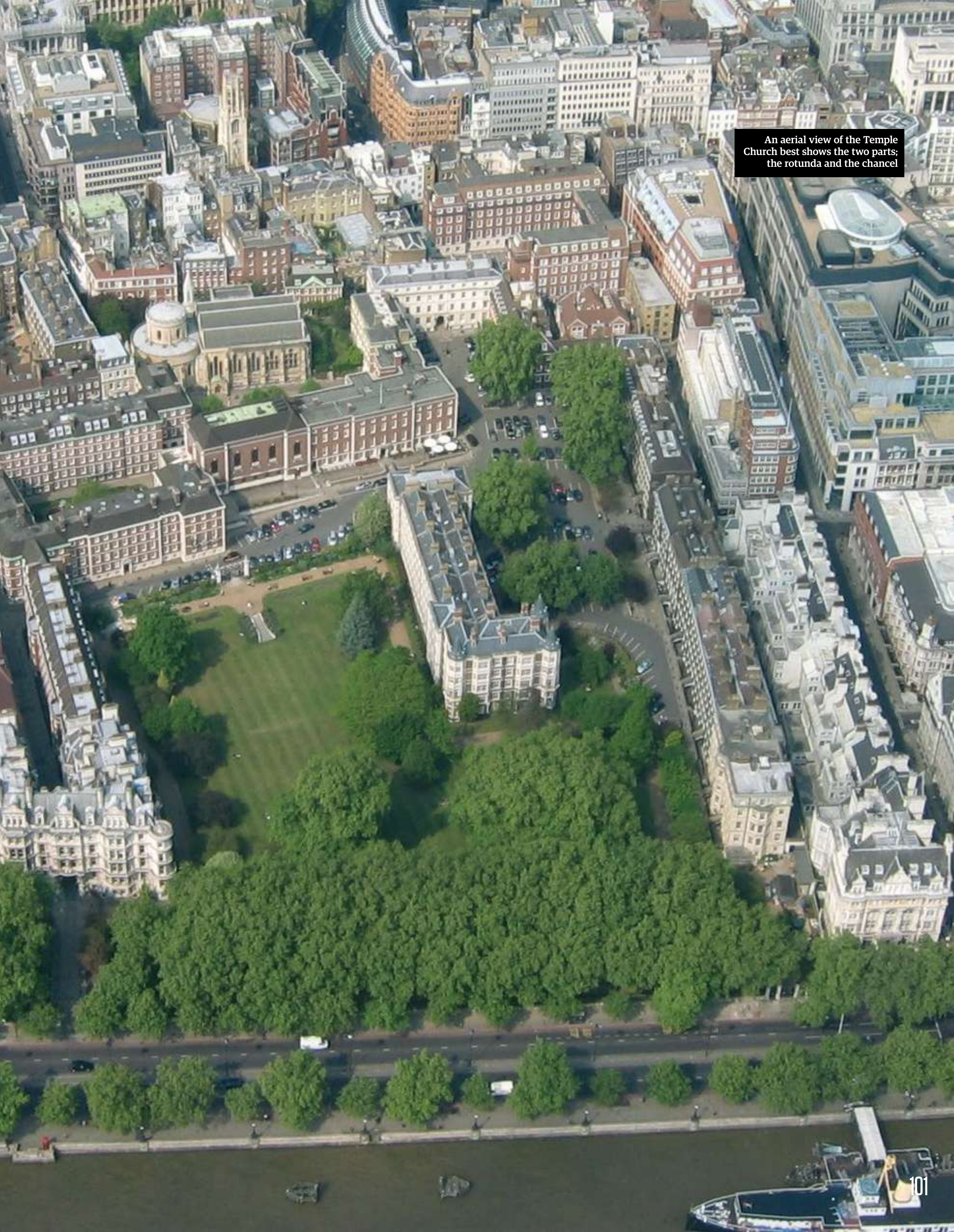
The Templars therefore put him in a coffin and suspended it from a tree in their orchard at the Old Temple. Nearly 20 years later, the Templars moved to their new curtilage, and loyally buried Mandeville in their new church. Three of the Marshals also have effigies here: the great William, 1st Earl of Pembroke and two of his sons, William and Gilbert. All were buried in front of the rood screen that separated the Round Church from the Chancel. In 1840, a row of nine medieval coffins was unearthed, just where the burials are likely to have been.

Antiquaries of the early 17th century recorded a further memorial to a Marshal. The antiquaries wondered if it was the monument to the famous 1st earl. Surprisingly, it had disappeared by the 1680s, and historians have suspected that the antiquaries were simply confused.

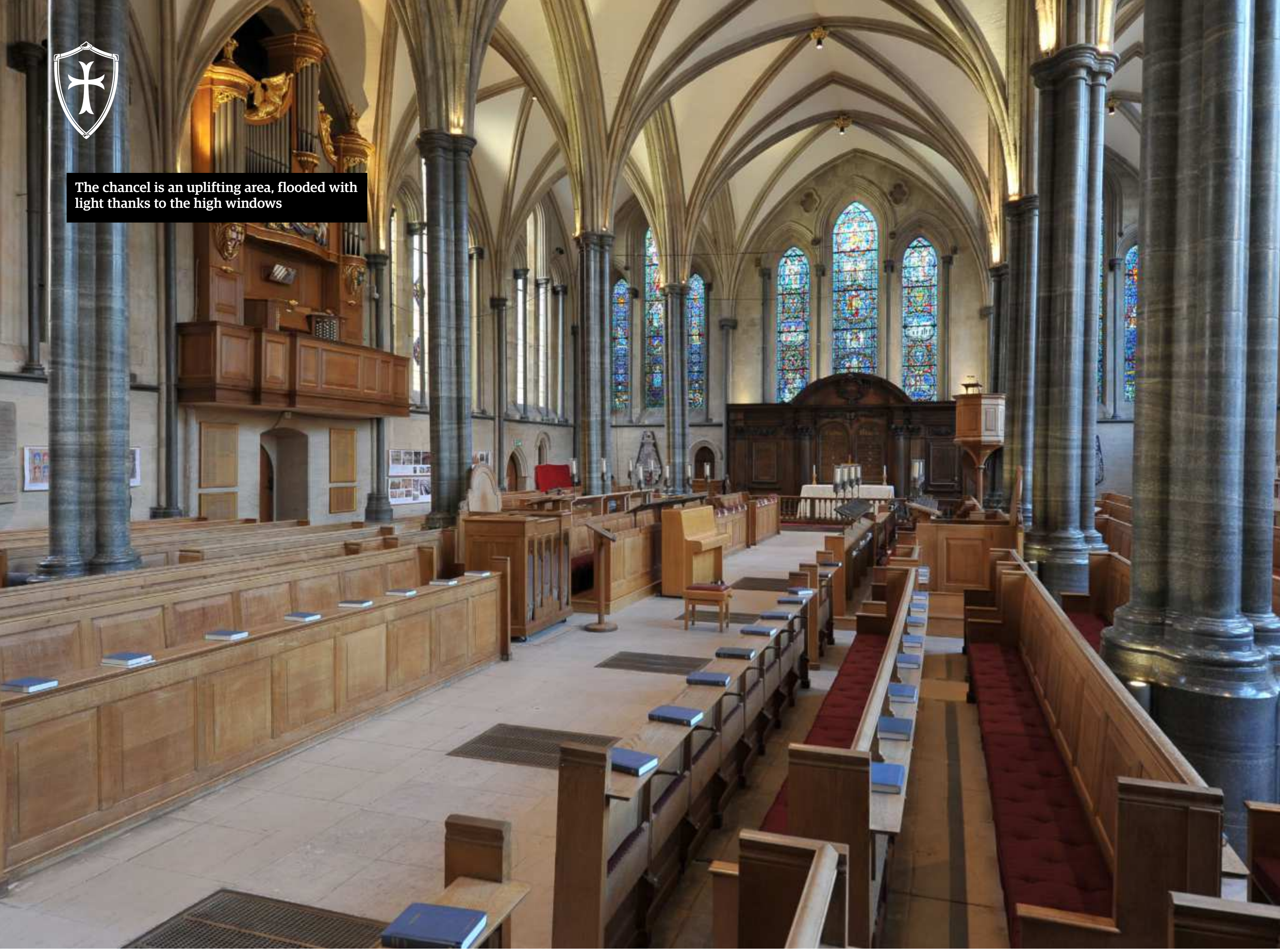
A series of drawings by John Guillim, circa 1610, has now been discovered in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC. It shows all the effigies known to have been here in 1610 - including the stone that has since been lost. It poses a gripping question: was this indeed the memorial to William Marshal, close friend of the Templars and hero of his age?



The effigies for William Marshal I and II



An aerial view of the Temple Church best shows the two parts; the rotunda and the chancel



The chancel is an uplifting area, flooded with light thanks to the high windows

infancy; and the Holy Sepulchre, site of his burial. The Middle Ages connected the beginning and the end of Jesus's life more closely than we might ourselves. Jesus was, as God, 'uncontainable', and he had, as a human, been contained only by his mother's womb for nine months and by his tomb for less than three days. Neither vessel had born a person before. And in both cases, according to classic Christian thought, Jesus had left the vessel with its seal still unbroken: his mother remained a virgin through his birth; the tomb was opened not to let him out but only to let his disciples see that he had gone. Womb and tomb: the Templars in Jerusalem had good reason to imagine the link between them and in their own rotundas to represent that link again. It is surely not quite a coincidence that, on his long visit to London in 1185, the Patriarch Heraclius of Jerusalem consecrated the Temple Church and dedicated it to the Virgin Mary at Candlemas, the feast of the infant Jesus's presentation in Jerusalem's Temple.

Heraclius was startlingly corrupt but faced with a crisis in Jerusalem, he rose to the occasion. By 1184 Baldwin IV, the Leper King of Jerusalem, was dying. Heraclius took a delegation around Europe in his search for a king to bring stability and strength to the Latin kingdoms in the Holy Land. Eventually he reached England and Henry II. The king sensibly turned down Heraclius's proposition. He offered money instead. "We need a man even without money," replied the Patriarch; "not money without the man." He tried threatening the king (never a good idea, with the Plantagenets).

Henry had never yet discharged his vow to go on crusade to atone for the murder of Thomas Becket in 1170. "I cannot leave my kingdom here," said the king; "my sons would take it off me in a trice." "No wonder," replied Heraclius; "from the devil they have come and to the devil they will go!" Heraclius was many things, but a diplomat he was not.

(In 2015, Heraclius's successor, the current Latin Patriarch, was in London. He called in to the Temple and here we prayed together for the peace of Jerusalem. It was a special moment. The Patriarch then apologised for the long gap since the last such trip, explained that the Patriarchate had been quite busy in the meantime, and promised that we would not wait another 830 years for the next visit.)

The rotunda of the Temple Church was then, an evocative, numinous place. It was also the heart of a major political, financial and diplomatic centre in England's polity. For most of the 13th century the king's treasure was at the Temple. Magnates and ambassadors visiting London would naturally have business to do with the Templars, who would have wanted to impress their guests. It was a place of worship, yes; but also of power. For much of the 13th century, the kings of England kept a lot of their treasure here, so did various barons and merchants. However, their valuables were not quite as safe as they might have hoped. In 1263, when royal finances were at a low ebb, Prince Edward broke into a number of strong boxes kept in the Temple and took nearly £10,000, belonging to others, away to Windsor Castle. And in 1307, his son was back for more: the new Edward II took jewels and money worth some £50,000.

It also became, within decades, a place of very particular patronage. By 1212 there was a rising danger of rebellion against King John; by 1214, when he finally lost the Battle of Bouvines and almost all his French possessions, he was nearly bankrupt. The Templars, however, remained loyal and the Temple became John's headquarters in the west of London. Of his several visits in 1214-5, the most important was 7-15 January 1215. The rebel barons came to a conference in the Temple 'fully armed and ready for war'. According to the barons' account, they asked the king to confirm their ancient and accustomed liberties. He refused, and in turn he asked them to undertake in writing on behalf of themselves and

A column at the Temple Church, London, erected in 2000 to celebrate the Millennium. The motif of two knights on one horse was a medieval symbol of the Templars, perhaps recalling their initial poverty

The Holy Sepulchre

Touching religious icons

On any visit to the Sepulchre, it is worth watching not just the place but the pilgrims. It was here that Jesus told Mary Magdalene on Easter Day: "Do not touch me," or "Do not cling to me." For present pilgrims, the Sepulchre is now a place, above all, of touch. Just inside the main doors is a stone, 2.1-metres long, marking the spot on which, it is said, Jesus's body was laid out and anointed for burial on the late afternoon of Good Friday. (The present stone has been there since 1810.) Pilgrims kneel at the stone and kiss it, or even rub it with cloths of their own, to catch and take with them some hint of the anointing oil that cleaned the body of Jesus.

Up to the right is the Greek Orthodox chapel of Calvary, site of the crucifixion; beneath the altar is a hole in the floor through which pilgrims, stooping low under the altar, can touch the stone of Calvary itself. And in the aedicule every pilgrim will touch and kiss the stone that lies over the ledge on which Jesus's body was laid. Nothing is more immediate and intimate than touch. To touch the place that the human Jesus touched, even if the stones themselves have over and again been replaced, is to feel closer to the person of Jesus than is possible anywhere else in the world. We should imagine some part of this aura, however remote and vicarious, in London's Temple Church too.

Pilgrims visit the tomb of Jesus Christ at the Holy Sepulchre

their successors that they would never in future demand such liberties. Now the barons refused. John sought refuge in delay: such innovation, he said, would take time. The barons gave him warning: they were pledging themselves, one and all, as a wall of defence for the house of the Lord and would stand firm for the liberty of the Church and the realm. The barons rightly distrusted the king: during the negotiations John sent emissaries (surely secretly) to the Pope.

The king's position was clearly fragile but still thought to be sustainable. This didn't last long, however. On 17 May, the rebels captured London, and the balance of power moved suddenly and irrevocably against John. So Magna Carta, 'the Great Charter', came into being at Runnymede outside Windsor on 15 June 1215.

Throughout this crisis, the balance of power lay with the great William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. When John died in 1216, William became guardian to his young son, King Henry III, and reissued Magna Carta in 1216 and 1217 over his own seal. In May 1217, William, by then in his 70s, personally led his army into the triumphant battle at Lincoln, then ordered an attack on the French fleet at Sandwich. The invasion - and the rebellion against the young Henry - were over.

William was a close friend of Aymeric de Saint Maur, the Master of the Temple in England. On his deathbed in 1219, William was admitted to the Templars and within days was buried in the rotunda of the Temple. His effigy still lies there. His eldest son, William Marshal the 2nd Earl of Pembroke, married the sister of King Henry III; this William II was also buried in the rotunda, where his effigy lies beside his father's. With them lies the effigy of the great William's third son, Gilbert.

In 1236 the king declared that he would himself be buried in the Temple Church and in turn, so did the queen. However, the king would be buried in Westminster Abbey, the queen in Amesbury.

The Templars knocked down the small chancel appended to the eastern side of their Round, and built the Early English Gothic chancel that survives today: a hall church with three aisles of equal height, thin walls, vast windows, narrow columns and wide spans. It is awash with air and light. The Templars' re-creation of Jerusalem had become a shrine to the Marshals. But the great William's five sons all died without issue; the dynasty had disappeared within two generations. It was left to William's daughters to carry on his line, if not his name.

On Friday 13 October 1307, the king of France had every Templar in his kingdom arrested. King Edward II of England did not credit the charges against them, and for nearly two years dragged his heels over their investigation. In 1308, nonetheless, an inventory was made of the movables in the Temple and the church itself. Here, on the point of its disappearance, the splendour of the church's furnishings is brought to life. There were six pairs of vestments, with tunics and dalmatics, and 11 chasubles for Mass; two organs each with a double rank of pipes, probably with a range of three octaves and perhaps mounted on the rood screen; 28 choir copes and four little copes for the choristers; a good collection of music books, including nine processionals, each for use by one singer on the move; and five carpets that lay before the high altar. Among the relics was one of the swords that had killed Becket, London's own martyr and a patron of the crusaders; there was a chapel dedicated to Becket across the courtyard from the church.

Each week we are joined at the Temple by visitors from all over the world, coming to see the church and to join our services. Seven hundred years after the Templars sang their last office here, we might still hope, when our present organ plays and our choirmen and choristers sing, to catch a faint echo of our forebears' music in this lovely place.

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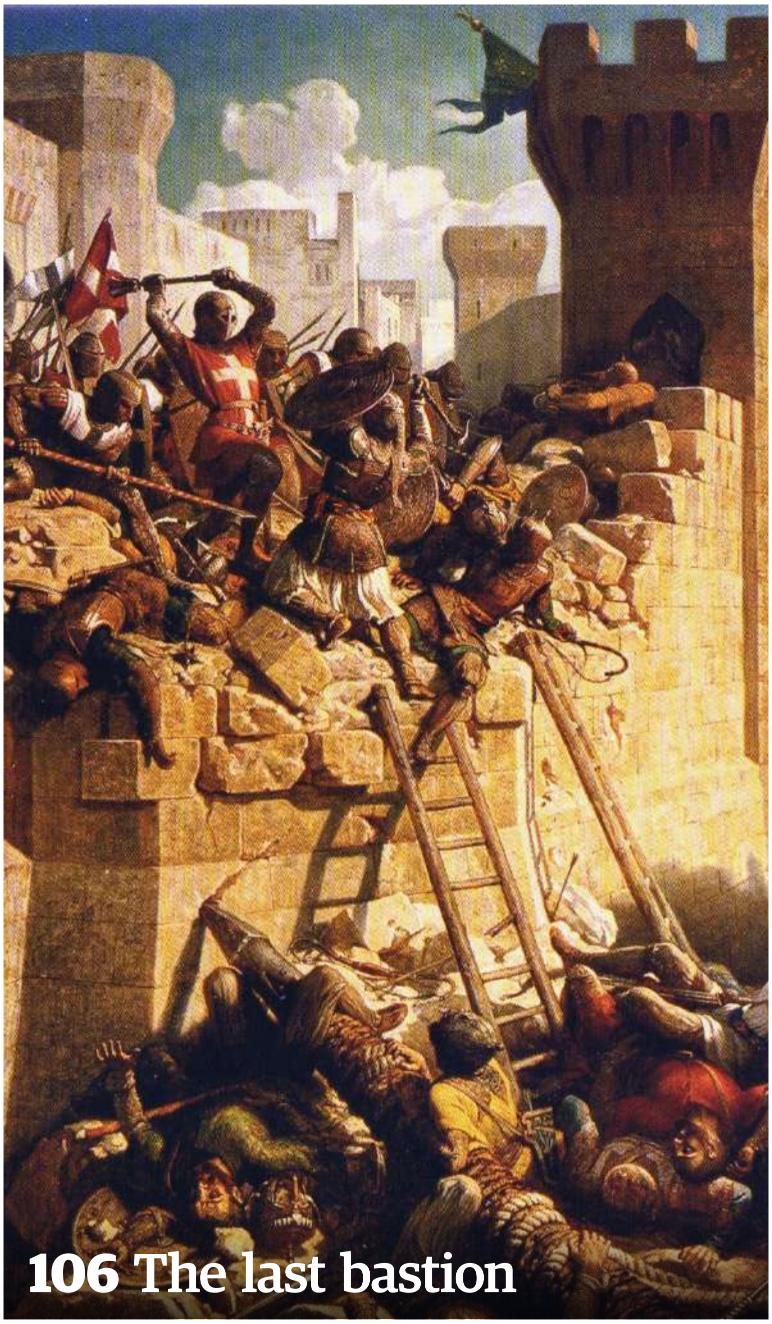
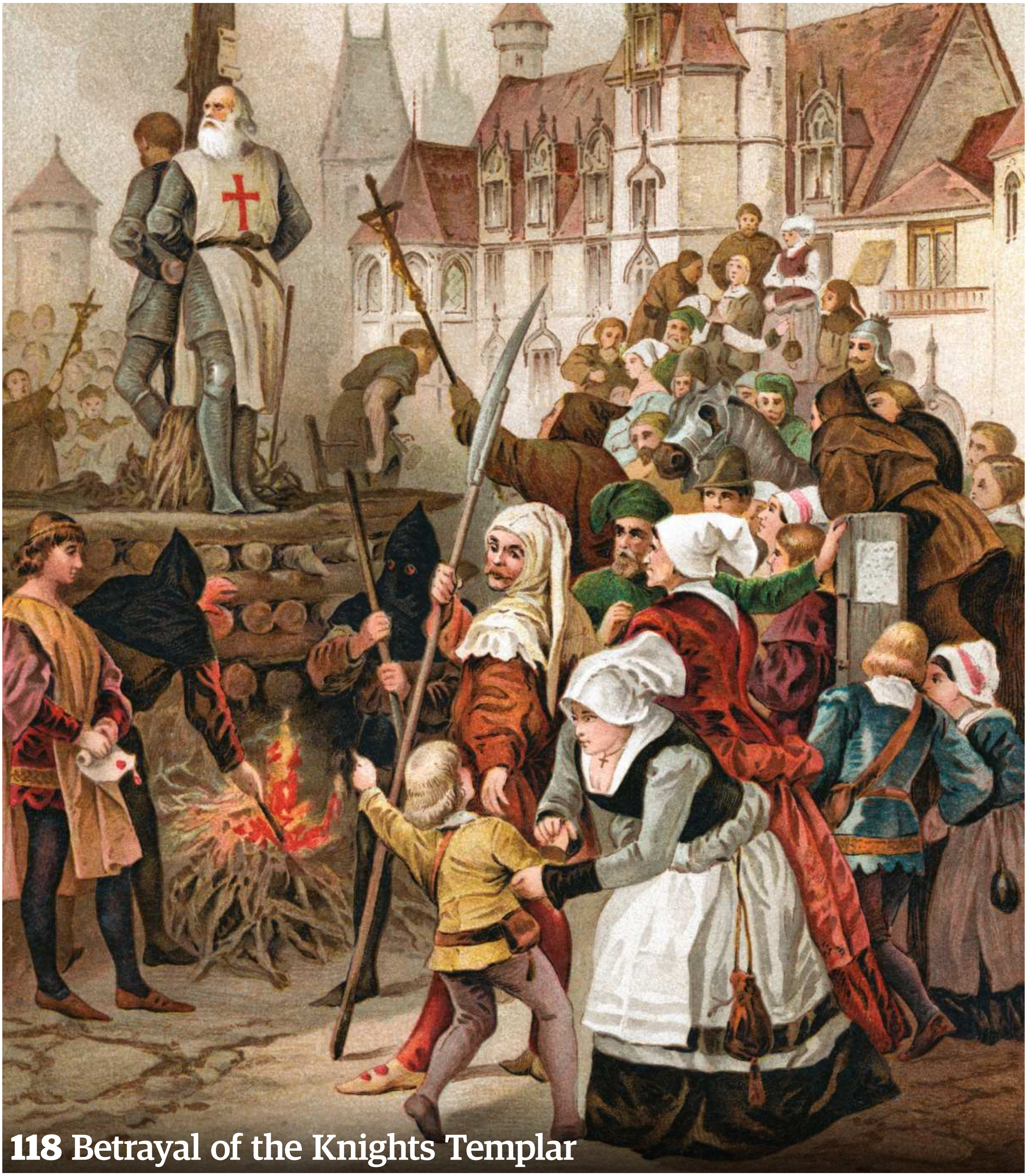
DECLINE OF THE TEMPLARS



106 The last bastion

112 Rule in Cyprus



118 Betrayal of the Knights Templar

The last bastion

Acre, a port and fortress city, was the bridgehead back to the Holy Land. As long as it was held, it would be possible to launch a new Crusade to take back Jerusalem

Written by Edoardo Albert

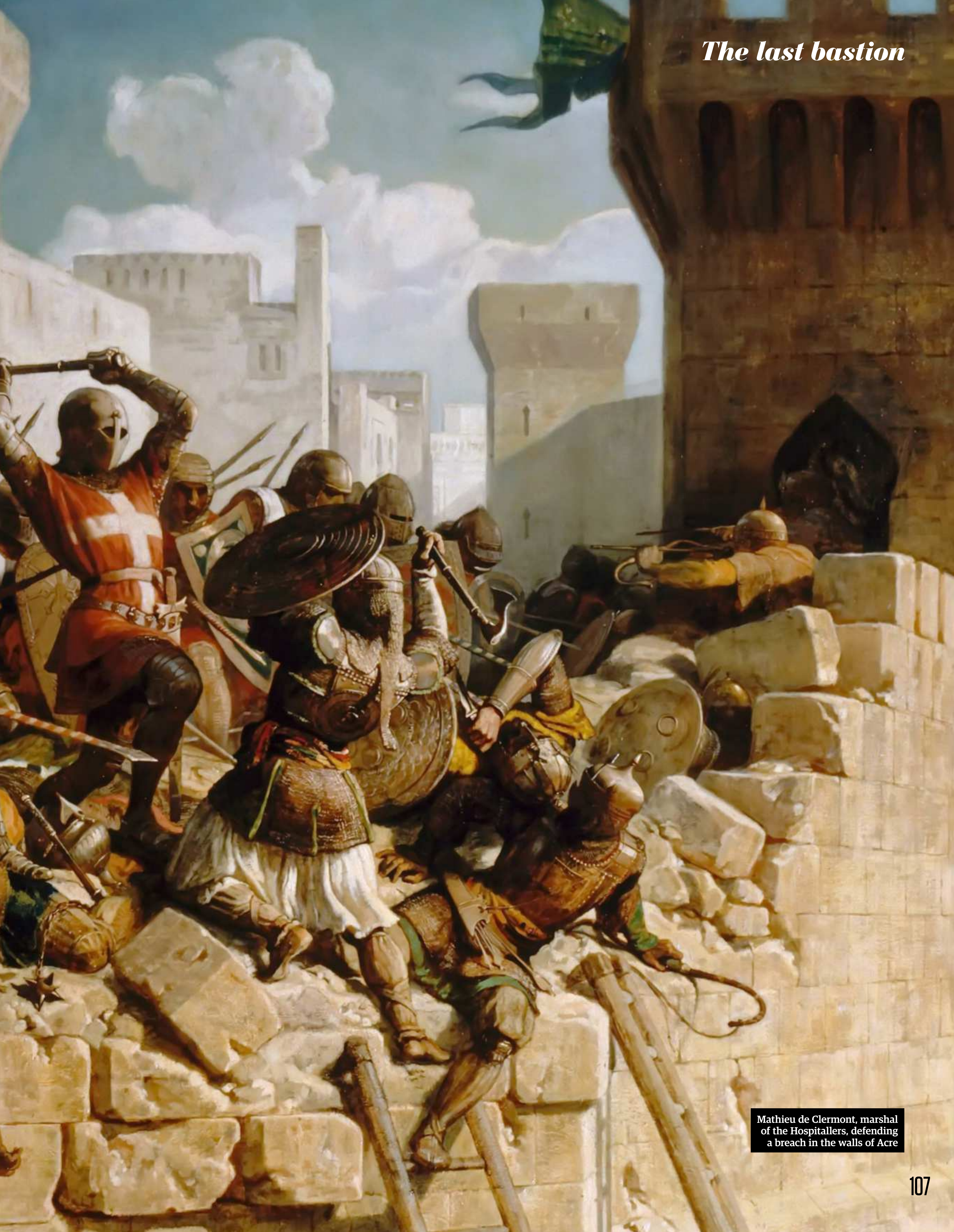
When William of Beaujeu, the grand master of the Knights Templar, was woken from his fitful sleep, it was by the sound of fighting; fighting all too close at hand. He jumped from his bed, barely pausing to put on his armour, and rushed to the fight.

It was 15 May in the Year of Our Lord 1291, and Acre, the last kingdom of Outremer, was tottering on the brink of destruction. But the seeds of its fall had been sown in the long decades before the troops of the Mamluk sultan had laid siege to the city, the last viable Crusader outpost in the Holy Land. As long as the Christians held Acre, there remained the real possibility of using the fortified port city as a base and logistics depot from which to launch an attempt to reconquer Jerusalem and the Holy Land. But should it fall, the Crusaders, and in particular the military orders committed to the Crusade, would no longer have a foothold in the country they were sworn to protect. Everything depended on holding Acre.

The remaining Crusader outposts had hoped that the death of their nemesis, the Mamluk Sultan Baybars, might have plunged the Muslims into their usual round of internecine fighting, but for their ill fortune, Baybars was soon succeeded by his best general, Qalawun. Mindful of the possibility of provoking a response from one or more of the kings of Europe - it was such a response from Richard the Lionheart of England and Philip II of France that had wrestled back control of Acre from Muslim hands - Qalawun at first moved cautiously, mopping up the more vulnerable Crusader outposts. Having taken Latakia, the last remaining port of the Crusader kingdom centred on Antioch, Qalawun prepared to assault Tripoli. The governance of the city was in dispute, and Qalawun's informers passed on word that the city would be an easy prize. But the Temple had a spy of its own, and a highly placed one at that: Emir al-Fakhri, who had intimate access to Qalawun's plans. Unfortunately, when William of Beaujeu, the Templar grand master, sent word to Tripoli of Qalawun's plans, the city's dignitaries didn't believe him. William had previously involved the Templars in the succession dispute in the County of Tripoli, which had degenerated into a nasty little civil war, and as a result had earned a somewhat unjust reputation for duplicity that stuck to him despite his efforts to shake it off, with ultimately disastrous consequences for the order.

Despite the warnings they had received from William, the citizens of Tripoli had not expected Qalawun to break the treaty that bound him from attacking them. But having found a pretext, Qalawun had no such qualms, and set about investing the port in March 1289. Tripoli fell on 26 April after a short siege. Peter of Moncada, the local commander of the Temple, who had remained in the city when other commanders had fled, was killed, as were all the men taken prisoner. Women and children were sold into slavery, and Qalawun ordered the city razed to the ground. The Mamluk sultan was pursuing a war of extermination. There would be no mercy and no quarter.

William, with his spy in Qalawun's court, was well aware of this, and painfully aware of the unpreparedness of Acre to withstand a siege. The Sultan was bound by another peace treaty not to attack Acre, and William sought to ensure the treaty's terms were not breached. It was no more than a delaying tactic while he sought to send warning to the kings of Europe and gather recruits to the defence of Acre against the assault that would surely come. But William's efforts to delay the attack were sabotaged by some of the men who came in as reinforcements. A contingent of newly arrived Lombards, hearing rumours of the seduction of a

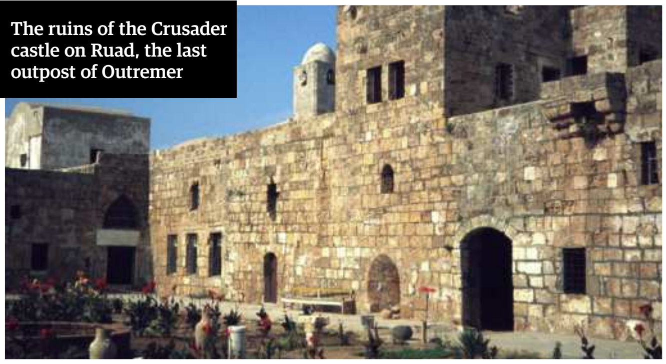


Mathieu de Clermont, marshal of the Hospitallers, defending a breach in the walls of Acre

The end of Outremer

Evacuation and abandonment

Even after Acre fell, there were still a few Crusader outposts in the Levant, but Al-Ashraf moved quickly to investigate them. First was Sidon, 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Acre. There was still a Templar castle there, but the Mamluks started building a causeway to the island on which it was situated, and the Templars abandoned it, heading north to Tortosa. But the Mamluks continued their inexorable march northwards. Beirut was taken on 31 July. Tortosa was abandoned in turn on 3 August. Even the nigh-on impregnable Templar stronghold of Castle Pilgrim was evacuated between 3 and 14 August. Their only remaining presence was two miles out to sea from Tortosa, on the fortified island of Ruad. The Templars held Ruad for a further 12 years before it was besieged. Once again, the Mamluks promised its defenders safe conduct, only to break their promise and kill or imprison the garrison.


The ruins of the Crusader castle on Ruad, the last outpost of Outremer

Christian woman by a Muslim, set to rioting and attacking Muslims in the city. The military orders and the magnates tried to stop the rioting, but news of the death of some Muslims leaked out to Qalawun. The sultan now had a pretext to break the treaty. He sent an envoy to Acre, demanding that the Lombards be handed over to him for execution. Still playing for time, William convened a city council to discuss Qalawun's ultimatum. Unable to bring themselves to hand over fellow Christians to the sultan, William proposed that they offer to release to Qalawun all the condemned criminals in the city, many of whom were Muslim. Instead, the council sent an emissary to explain to the Sultan that the rioters had been newcomers, unaware of the local laws, but that in fact the riot had been started by local Muslims.

This was enough pretext for Qalawun to break the treaty. He set to preparing his armies to attack Acre. The Temple's spy, Emir al-Fakhri, faithfully reported the preparations to William, who tried to alert the city to what was happening. But like Cassandra, no one believed him. Seeing the net close in, William tried to treat with the sultan himself, sending an emissary to Qalawun to learn his terms. The Mamluk sultan set the price at one sequin for every person in Acre. But when William tried to sell the deal to the council he was shouted down.

So there must have been some sense of vindication mixed with apprehension at what was to come when William looked out from the walls of Acre on 6 April 1291 to see that the vanguard of the Mamluk army had arrived and was beginning to scout out the city. There had, though, in the months before been a sudden hope that the Mamluks might not come after all, for Qalawun had left Cairo on 4 November 1290 to lead his army on the long journey to Acre, but immediately fell ill and died less than a week after setting out. But unfortunately for the remaining Crusader enclaves, there was no descent into factional fighting among the Mamluks. Qalawun's son, Al-Ashraf Khalil, took immediate charge. Seeking victory to cement his rule, and with the army already advancing, Al-Ashraf continued on to Acre.

The defenders of Acre had ample time to call for aid from Europe, but precious few men had answered their desperate call. For its defence, the city could call on 1,000 knights and 14,000 men-at-arms. Every man in the city was issued with arms and expected to take part in Acre's defence; but even so, the defenders – when they looked out at the slowly assembling Mamluk army – realised that they were completely outnumbered, with more than ten Mamluk soldiers for every defender.

The defenders were each assigned a section of the city's walls to guard. The Templars manned the

The refectory of the Hospitaller fortress in Acre

This 350-metre-long (1,148-feet-long) tunnel, only rediscovered in 1994, connected the Templar fortress to the port

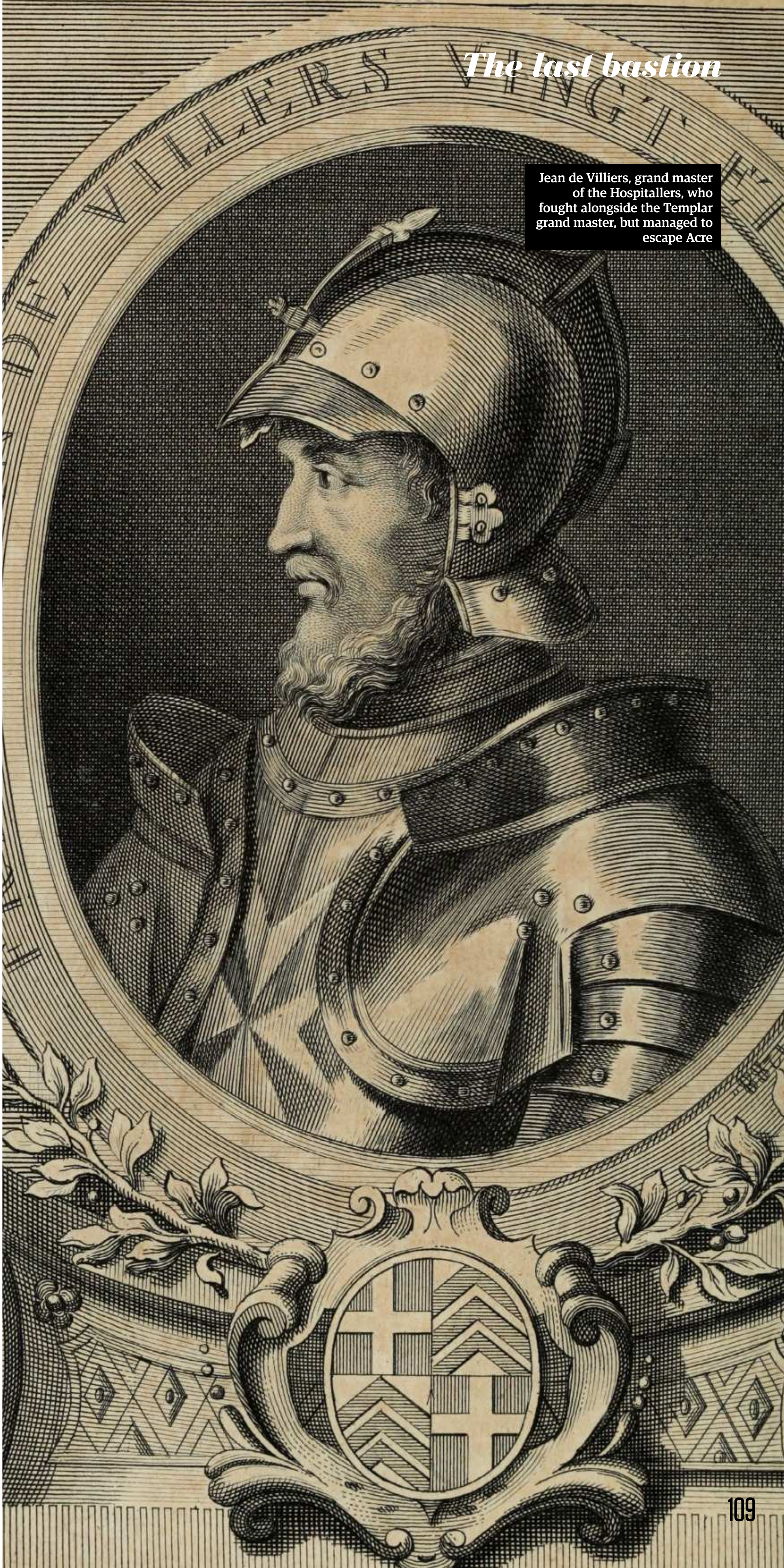
walls at their eastern end, where they met the sea, with the Hospitallers guarding the section of the ramparts next to them. The Templars also had a fort in the seaward corner of the city.

The Mamluks opened their assault with arrows. Hissing showers of them, dispatched by archers who seemed to be beyond number, that were intended to force the defenders to keep under cover while engineers moved closer to the walls, digging covered access trenches so that they could start undermining the fortifications. The defenders kept the gates of Acre open, but defended them heavily, for they hoped to disrupt the siege by sortie. Making use of the full moon, William led a night-time sortie on 15 April, aimed at destroying the Mamluk artillery, the destructive catapults and mangonels that were raining rocks down on the city. The raid was a success, but did little other than to delay the Mamluk advance. Soon, there were Mamluk engineers in place all round the city's walls, working to undermine them.

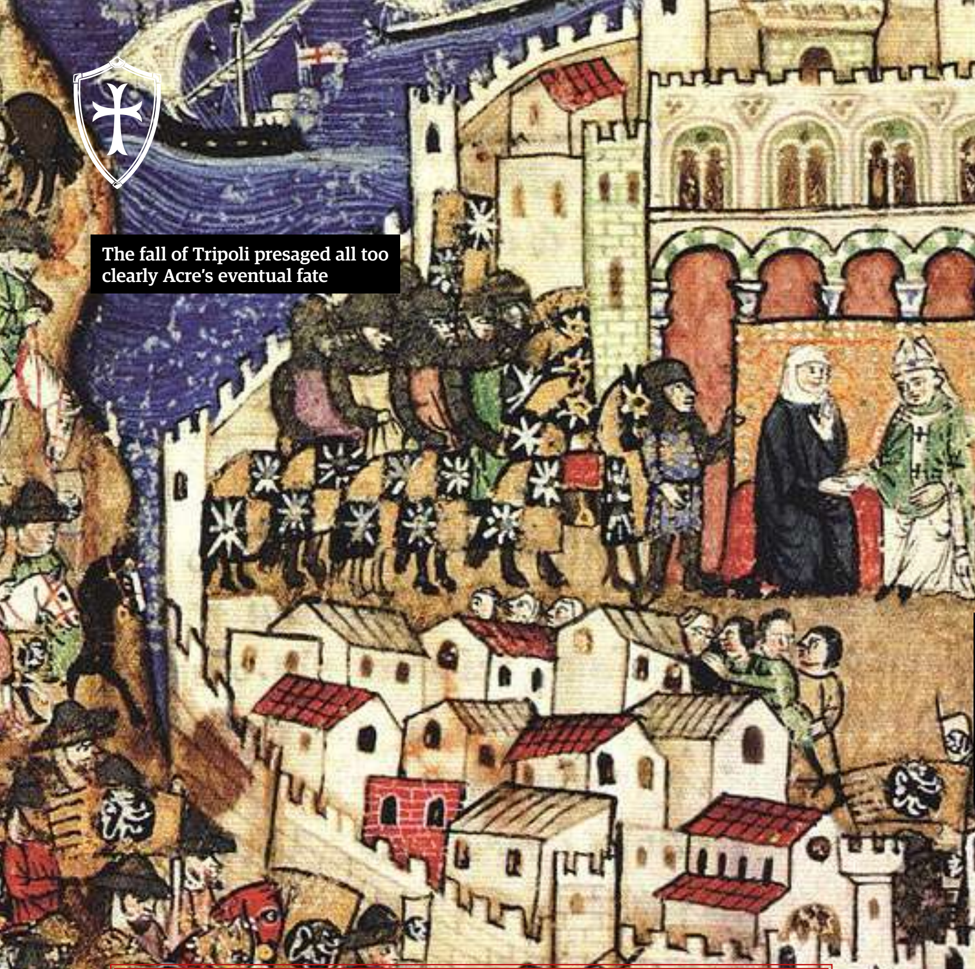
Reinforcements continued to dribble in, and the defender's hopes were buoyed when King Henry II of Cyprus arrived with 700 men. But by 8 May, the Mamluk engineers had succeeded in undermining the first of the city's defensive towers. During the following week, more of the garrison towers along the city's walls were undermined and collapsed. The Mamluk army drew in tighter. All the defenders knew the final assault was coming, but they did not know when.

Exhausted by weeks of combat and months of command, William of Beaujeu slipped into a battlefield daze in the Templar house that served as command post for the section of the wall the Knights were guarding. It was the drums that woke him, coming from St Anthony's Gate at the end of the section of Hospitaller wall. The drums, and the noise of battle, told him that the gate had been breached. The Mamluks were in the city. It was 18 May 1291. William buckled on his armour as quickly as he could, then ran from the Templar house to his waiting horse, calling on all the available Templars to ride with him. Should the Muslims hold the breach then the weight of the Mamluk army, the huge advantage they had in manpower, would drive the defenders slowly backwards and the dam would burst. The only chance was to counterattack and throw them back before they consolidated their hold on the gate. William gathered about 20 men together then rode pell mell towards the gate, pushing aside the panicking civilians who were streaming towards the harbour hoping to find a boat to take them off the beach to one of the ships moored in the harbour.

On his way to the gate, William was joined by Jean de Villiers, the Hospitaller grand master, who too had heard the deadly noise of battle and was rushing to the breach with all the Hospitallers he could summon. The grand masters of the two military orders, so long rivals and sometimes enemies, rode alongside each other to the gate. If they could not first plug this breach and throw back the Mamluks then the city was lost.



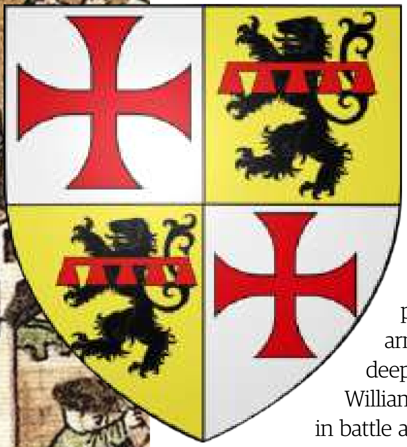
Jean de Villiers, grand master of the Hospitallers, who fought alongside the Templar grand master, but managed to escape Acre



The fall of Tripoli presaged all too clearly Acre's eventual fate

Arriving at the gate, they saw that the Mamluks had brought down a section of wall and were coming in through the breach. Side by side, Templars and Hospitallers charged, lances levelled, into a furious storm of arrows. But it was not only arrows they faced: the Mamluk army had incendiaries, canisters of what was called Greek fire, that once ignited could not be put out.

It must have been a scene more like that of the Gunpowder age than a medieval battle. Time after time, the Templars and Hospitallers charged, only to be beaten back by the hail of arrows and volleys of Greek fire. Meanwhile, the Mamluks were pushing further in, maintaining a wall of shields, and widening the breach.



As William raised his arm to signal another charge, he felt himself pierced. He looked down to see a javelin embedded in his left armpit. It had passed through a gap in his armour and buried itself palm-deep into the grand master. William had seen many men die in battle and killed more than a few himself. The wound was mortal. He knew that. Still conscious, he tried to stay in the saddle, knowing that his fall would embolden the Mamluks and cause dismay to his followers. But darkness took him, and he fell from his horse. His servants, seeing him slip to the ground, carried him from the battle on a shield down to the beach, looking for a boat to carry them from the doomed city. But the sea was up. No boats could land. Instead, they carried William to the Templar fort in the corner of the city by the harbour.

From outside, there came the screams and cries and burning of a city being despoiled, its people murdered and raped. William drifted back to consciousness and, hearing the sound, asked what was happening. He was told his men were still fighting. William closed his eyes. The grand master of the Templars died later that evening.

Amid the chaos and killing, some escaped. Jean de Villiers and Henry II got to boats in the harbour, but the patriarch of Jerusalem drowned when he kept pulling evacuees on to his boat and it capsized. Those who could, got to the harbour, parlaying everything they had for passage to a ship to take them to safety. Those who couldn't get there made for the Templar fortress, the last bastion in the city. There, command had fallen to Peter of Sevrey, the Templar marshal, who took in as many people as he could save and barred the gates.

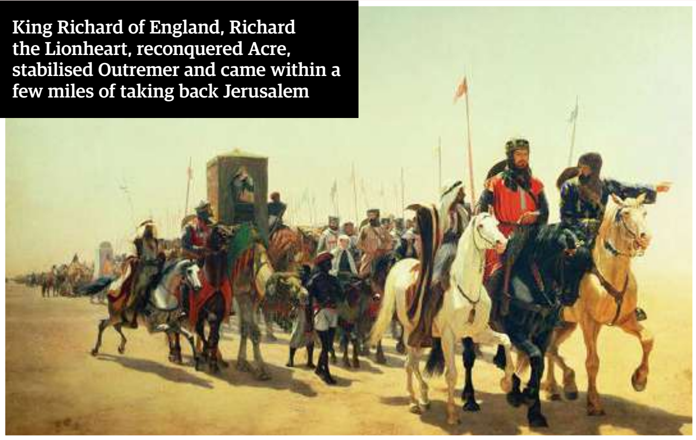
Outside, the Mamluks embarked on a frenzy of slaughter. So many girls were taken to be sold later that the price of a slave girl in the markets in Damascus fell to one drachma.

But the Templar fortress still stood defiant. The sultan, Al-Ashraf, offered the defenders terms: surrender and be allowed to embark on ships with

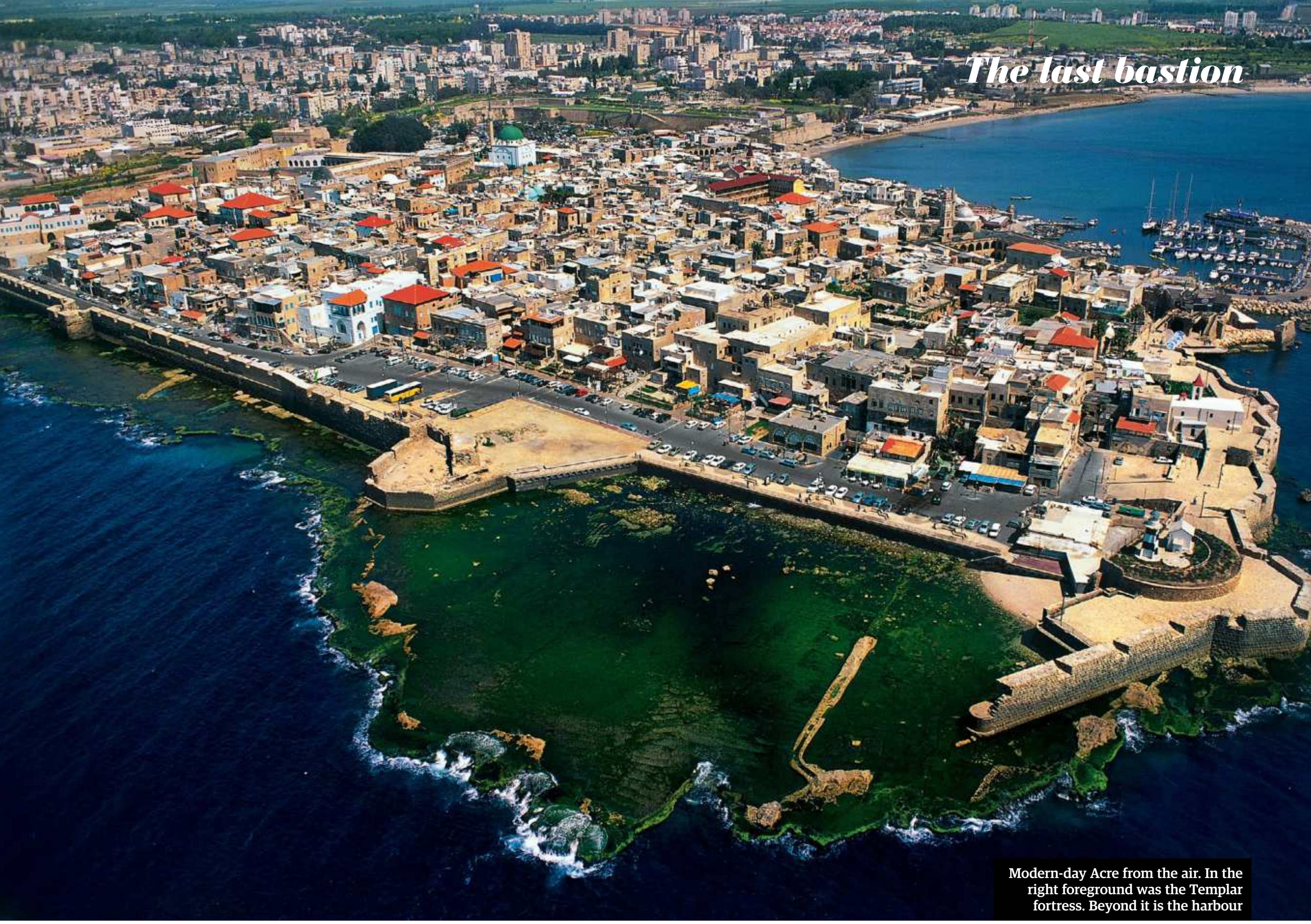
Why did no one help?

Damaging consequences for the Templars

Even when it became clear that an attack on Acre was imminent, precious little aid and fewer men arrived from Europe to assist in the city's defence. It was now nearly two centuries since the First Crusade had succeeded, against every obstacle, in taking Jerusalem and establishing Outremer. But Jerusalem itself had fallen in 1187. Although the Third Crusade had retaken Acre and re-established the Crusader presence in the Holy Land, the events of the 13th century had seen the whole idea of Crusading devalued. There was the disaster of the Fourth Crusade that had ended up sacking Constantinople and never got anywhere near the Holy Land. Then there was the broadening out of the whole concept of Crusade so that by 1282 the pope could call for a Crusade against the Christian Aragonese, evidently conflating the papacy's political enemies with the enemies of God towards whom Crusade was supposed to be directed. Given the continuing doubts that many people had about whether Jesus really wanted people killed in his name, it was becoming clear that the idea of Crusade as a divinely sanctioned act of pious military action had become devalued. The damage this did to the Templars and the other crusading orders was evident in the stinging rebuke a Templar levelled at Pope Nicholas IV: "You could have relieved the Holy Land with the power of kings and the strength of the other faithful of Christ… but you preferred to attack a Christian king and the Christian Sicilians, arming kings against a king to recover the island of Sicily."



King Richard of England, Richard the Lionheart, reconquered Acre, stabilised Outremer and came within a few miles of taking back Jerusalem



Modern-day Acre from the air. In the right foreground was the Templar fortress. Beyond it is the harbour

all their possessions and leave. Mindful of the many civilians sheltering in the fortress, Peter of Sevrey agreed to the terms. But when they opened the gate to allow in a party of the sultan's men to supervise the surrender, the 400 Mamluk soldiers began to assault the women and children who had taken shelter in the fortress.

Seeing this, Peter of Sevrey ordered the gates closed. The Mamluks were killed, almost to the last man. His men dead, Al-Ashraf sent another envoy to Peter, admitting his men's responsibility for their deaths and suggesting that the marshal come to him in person to negotiate terms. There were many hundreds of civilians under the marshal's care. His only chance of saving them was to negotiate a way out. Peter, with a small entourage of Templars, took that chance, leaving the fortress and being ushered through the Mamluk lines to the sultan's tent. But then the sultan's men fell upon Peter and his men, seizing and beheading them. There would be no settlement.

On 28 May, the Mamluks breached the walls of the fortress. They stormed in but, as they did so, the fortress collapsed about them, killing most of the attackers. One chronicler said that the Templars brought down the fortress upon themselves and attackers alike in a final act of defiance.

Acre had fallen. Outremer was destroyed. The Crusades had failed.

Rule in Cyprus

The Knights Templar ruled Cyprus and made the Eastern Mediterranean island their headquarters during turbulent times in the Holy Land

Written by Mike Haskew

Inevitably, due to its proximity to the sea routes to the Holy Land, the Eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus became a focal point for European exploitation and intrigue during the Crusades, the protracted effort to occupy the sacred territory and defeat the Muslim forces that controlled it. For nearly 400 years from the dawn of the 13th century through the late 1500s, the stories of the island and the Knights Templar, for better and worse, were inextricably intertwined.

With the rise of the great leader Saladin in the mid-12th century, Muslim opposition to the Crusades became more unified than ever before. Consolidating power, Saladin crushed opposition within the Fatimid Caliphate and became vizier in 1169. He then embarked on a military campaign against the Crusaders that brought much of the Holy Land back under Muslim control. On 4 July 1187, the Crusaders suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of Saladin's forces during the Battle of Hattin. The Crusaders' losses were so great that one observer recalled that witnesses who surveyed the field and saw the number of dead would scarcely have believed there were any survivors among the defeated.

Three months after the Battle of Hattin, Jerusalem fell to Saladin, and with it the king of the Crusader state, Guy of Lusignan, was captured. Hoping that Guy might sow the seeds of discord among the Crusader nobility that remained, Saladin released Guy. Denied entry into the city of Tyre, Guy gathered a small army and laid siege to the port of Acre, which became a rallying point for a resurgence of Crusader zeal that resulted in the Third Crusade, prosecuted primarily by the Latin Church and the crowned heads of England, France and the Germanic states.

In 1189, Richard The Lionheart of England and Philip II of France set out with their armies across the Mediterranean. Buffeted by a storm, several ships of Richard's fleet were blown off course. Three were sunk off Cyprus near the port city of Limassol and their crews imprisoned by the island's governor, Isaac Komnenos. Another ship, carrying Richard's sister, Joan, and his betrothed, Berengaria of Navarre, reached Cyprus, and the crew requested water. Isaac refused. Soon, Richard made landfall, and the king was enraged at the treatment of his family and crews. His well-trained army attacked, making short work of Isaac's defenders.

Realising that his survival was doubtful, Isaac offered Richard 20,000 gold coins and 500 troops as appeasement along with the request that he should not be bound in iron. Richard doubted Isaac's sincerity, and instead bound the upstart in shackles of silver. The king resumed his trek towards the Holy Land, leaving Cyprus as conquered territory, and trusted nobles Robert of Tornham and Richard of Camville in charge of garrisons across the island. Richard the Lionheart had hardly departed when civil unrest began. When word of the continuing disturbances reached him, Richard concluded that maintaining control of Cyprus while prosecuting the Third Crusade would be a virtually impossible task.

Enter the Knights Templar. The leaders of the powerful religious order of fighting monks had long sought an opportunity to establish a nation of their own with territorial boundaries, even though the papal bull titled *Omne datum optimum* issued by Pope Innocent II in 1139 had given the Knights free rein across Europe. Robert IV de Sable, the 11th grand master of the Knights Templar, who had been instrumental in convincing Innocent II to issue the

far-reaching bull, offered to purchase Cyprus from the crusading Richard for 100,000 gold coins. De Sable made a down payment of 40,000 coins, and the rest was to be paid over time from the profits the Knights expected from their enterprise on the island.

For the Knights Templar, the ownership of Cyprus presented an enhancement to the commerce they dominated along the Eastern Mediterranean sea routes - not to mention whatever taxes, tributes and general exploitation they might wring out of the Cypriot people. There were problems to address, however. As one of the premiere fighting forces in the known world, the combat services of the Knights Templar were often needed in other locales. De Sable therefore was able only to leave a token force of Knights to administer the island. Ancient accounts vary regarding the strength of the Knights on Cyprus, but some give a paltry range of only 14 to 20 warrior monks supported by some 20 sergeants and 74 men at arms.

The Templar commander on Cyprus, Armand Bouchart, was clearly unable to provide effective administration of the entire island of 10,000 square kilometres with such a small force. Besides, the Knights that were charged with maintaining control were warriors rather than administrators. When Richard the Lionheart had conquered Cyprus and

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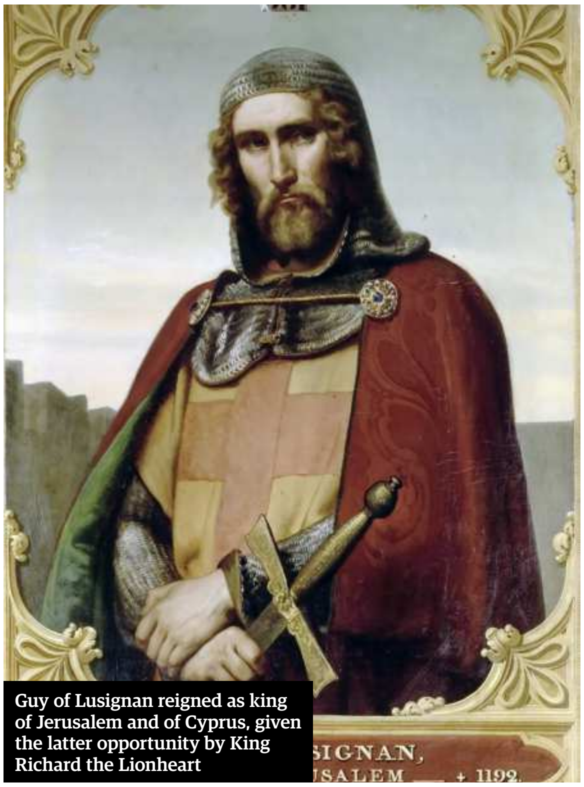
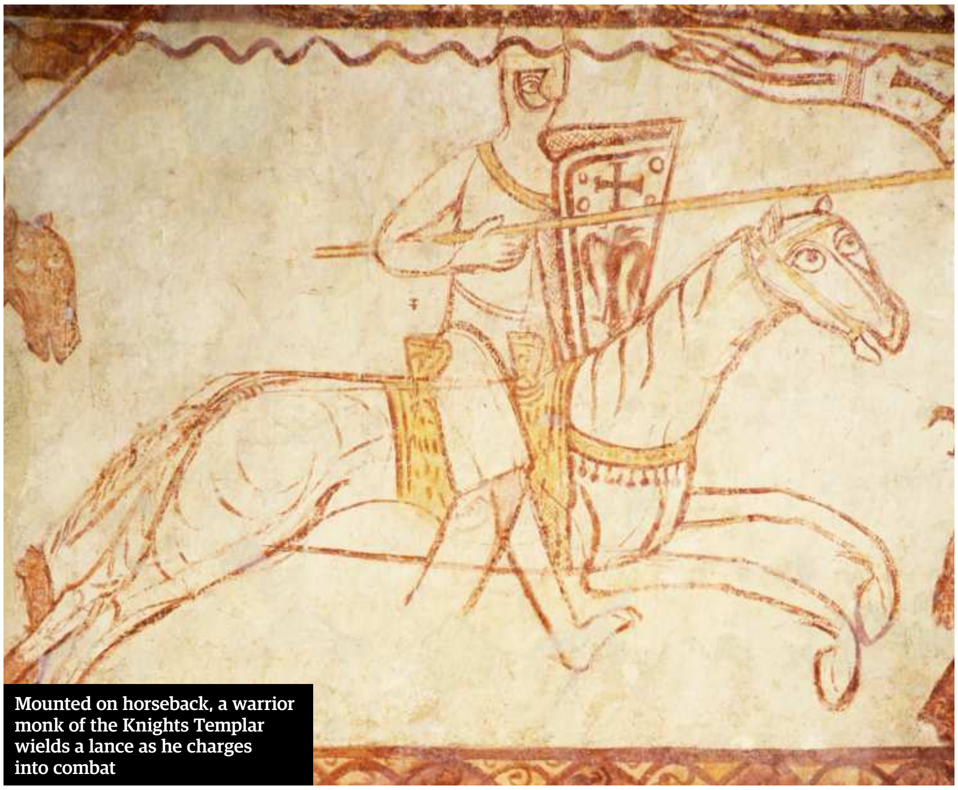


Guy of Lusignan reigned as king of Jerusalem and of Cyprus, given the latter opportunity by King Richard the Lionheart



Mounted on horseback, a warrior monk of the Knights Templar wields a lance as he charges into combat

imprisoned Isaac Komnenos, the people of Cyprus probably viewed the English king as a liberator, having deposed the tyrant who exploited them for years. Perhaps then, by the time the Knights Templar began to assert control over Cyprus, the euphoria of Isaac's defeat had passed.

Some scholars speculate that the people steadily grew tired of foreign domination, particularly by Muslims and then Knights of the Roman Catholic Church, as the Cypriots were largely of the Eastern Orthodox faith. Tales of Templar arrogance began to surface as the Knights helped themselves to whatever they wanted, levied heavy taxes, and discharged authority arbitrarily, treating the inhabitants of Cyprus with disdain, much as they had the Muslim peasantry in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. In a short while, the Knights Templar had alienated both the nobility and ordinary citizenry of Cyprus.

Open rebellion against the Templars broke out on 5 April 1192, and the small force of Knights on Cyprus was rapidly beset by angry mobs, which compelled Bouchart and his band to retreat to the temporary safety of their commandery in the town of Nicosia. Accounts of the ensuing drama vary, but it is believed that an offer from the Knights to surrender control of the island in exchange for safe conduct to a port so that they could escape was summarily rejected by the angry people.

Some contemporary historians related that the Knights, cornered as they were, had no choice but to place their fate in the hands of God and mount a counterattack. Supposedly on Easter Sunday, after attending mass, the Knights ventured out of the castle and attacked their enemies. The Cypriots were slain in great numbers as the mounted Knights rode through the streets of the towns and slaughtered indiscriminately.

One Western observer, William of Tyre, however, tells a different story: one of a bloody and desperate encounter. "When brother Reynald Bochard (Bouchart), who was their commander and the brothers realised that the Greeks (Cypriots) would have no mercy, they commended themselves to God and were confessed and absolved. Then they armed themselves and went out against the Greeks and fought them," William wrote. "God by His providence gave the victory to the Templars, and many Greeks were killed or taken. They (Knights) immediately came to Acre and explained what had happened to the master and convent. They took counsel among themselves and agreed that they could no longer keep the island as their property but would return it to King Richard in exchange for the security that they had given him."

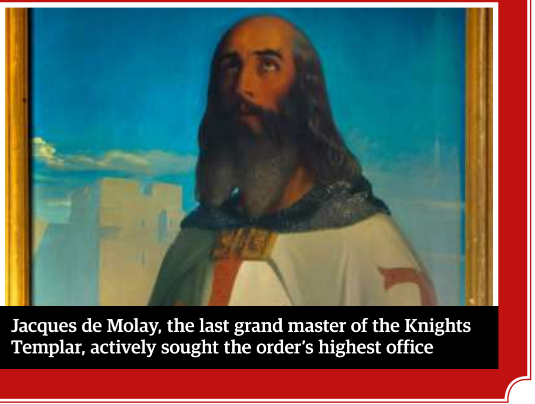
Their case of buyer's remorse in full flower, the Knights did approach King Richard desiring

De Molay and self promotion

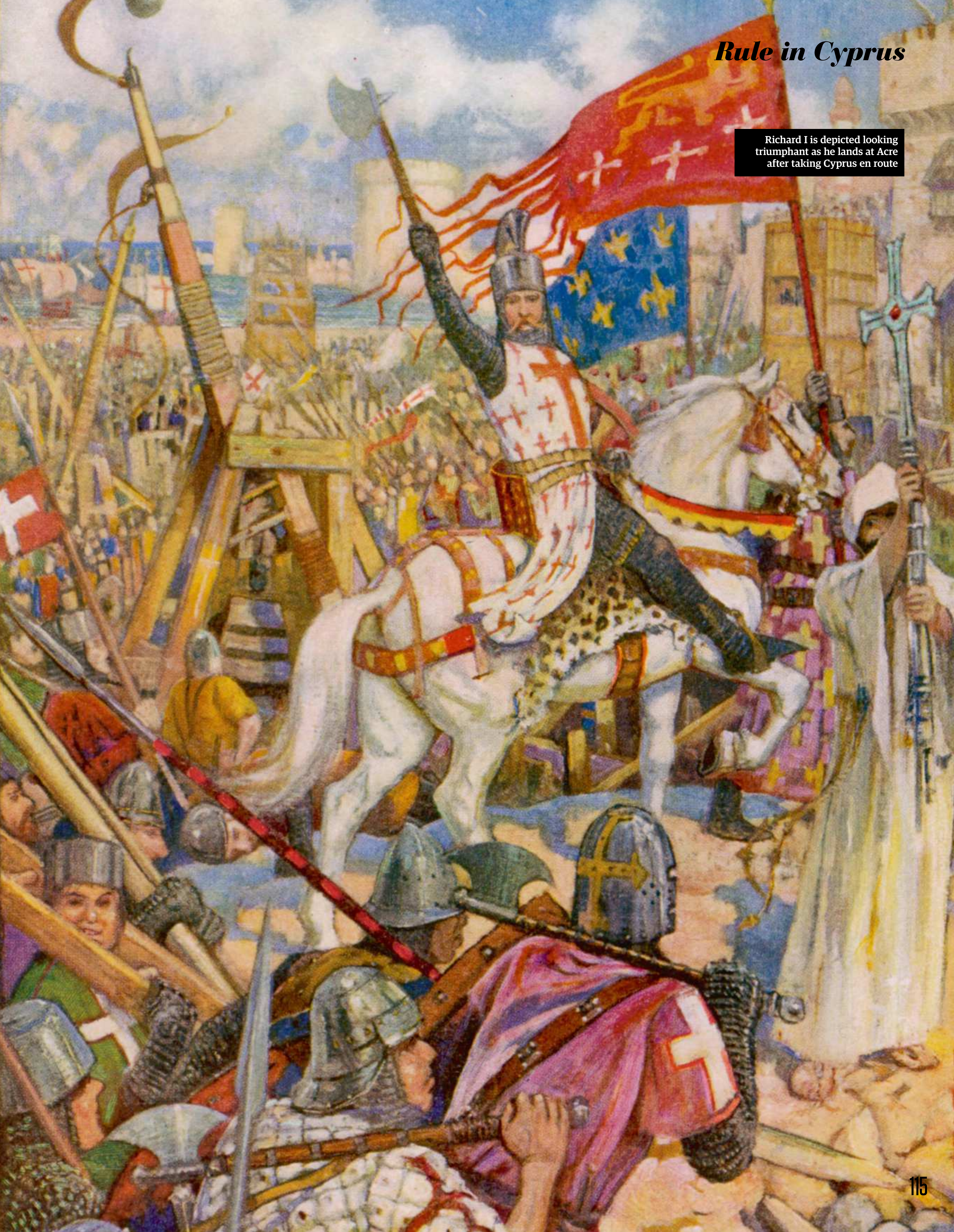
Hopes of rising to the highest Templar office

From 1273 to 1291, the grand master of the Knights Templar was Guillaume de Beaujeu, who perished in the siege of Acre and was the last grand master to preside over the Knights in the Holy Land. Jacques de Molay was apparently a critic of de Beaujeu, considering the latter's position against the Muslims to be too passive. De Molay spoke against the leader and even asserted that he was guilty of deceit and betrayal of the order. Of course, de Molay's campaign to discredit de Beaujeu was fuelled by his own hopes of rising to the highest Templar office.

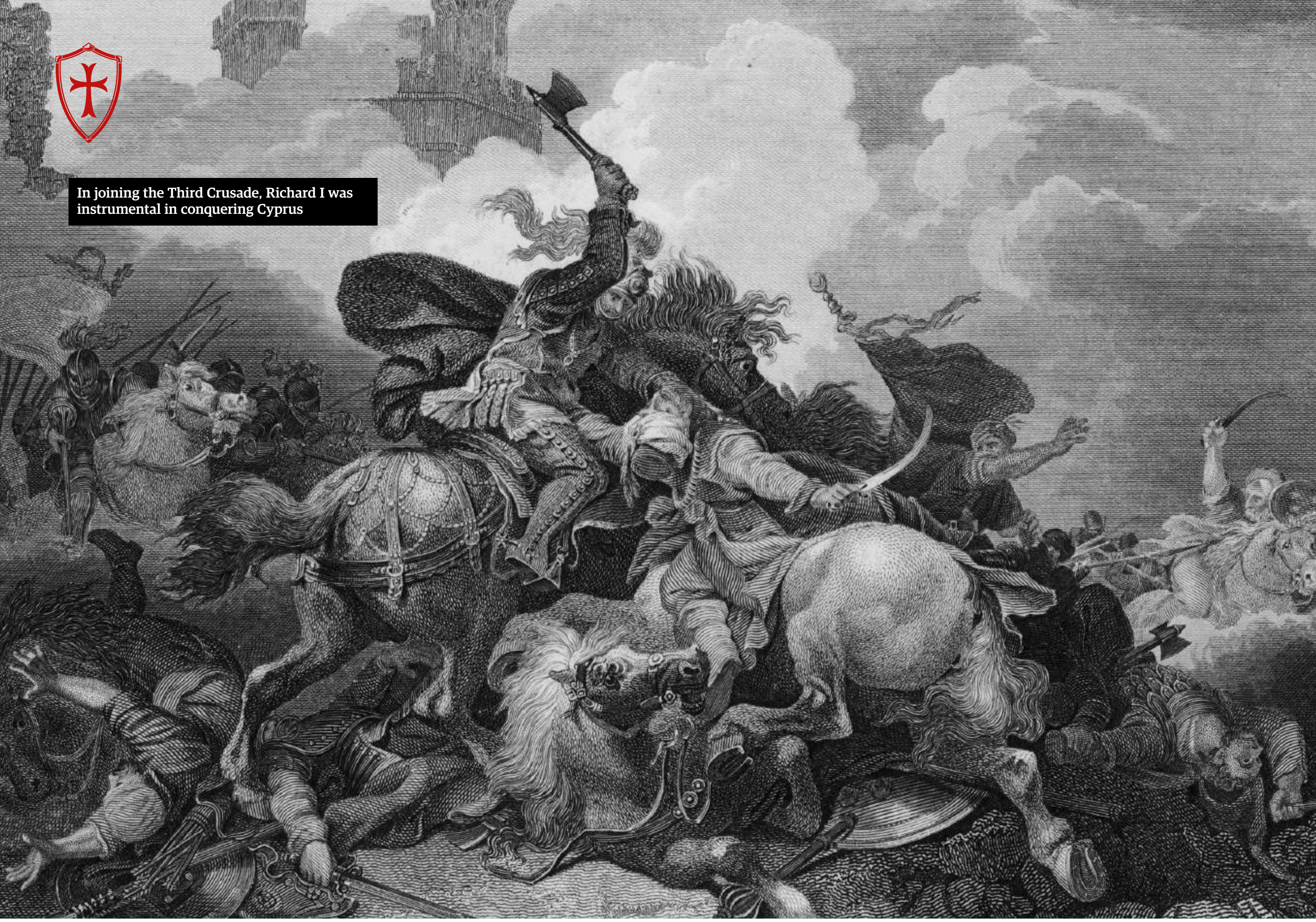
However, shortly after de Beaujeu's death, Thibaud Gaudin was elected grand master at Sidon in August 1291. During subsequent proceedings, de Molay was named a marshal to replace Pierre de Severy, who also died at Acre. Although his desire to become grand master had been thwarted, the setback was only temporary for de Molay. Continuing his effort, he spoke against Gaudin, asserting that he was a more qualified alternative. Gaudin held the title of grand master for less than year. Following his death on 16 April 1292, de Molay was elected to the position he coveted.



Jacques de Molay, the last grand master of the Knights Templar, actively sought the order's highest office



Richard I is depicted looking triumphant as he lands at Acre after taking Cyprus en route



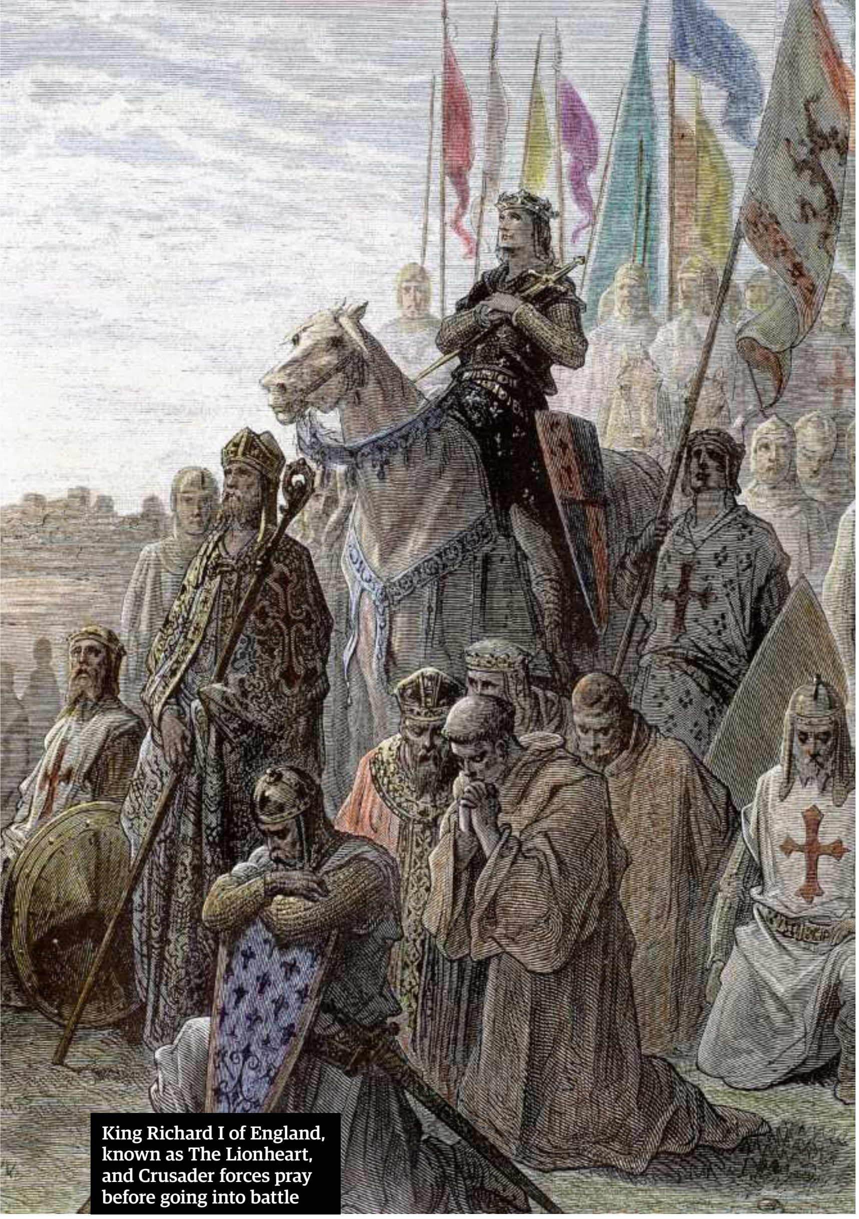
In joining the Third Crusade, Richard I was instrumental in conquering Cyprus

Kolossi Castle in southwest Cyprus was a Crusader stronghold once briefly occupied by the Knights Templar

to return the troublesome island to his royal ownership. Richard had little interest in taking on Cyprus once again, but he did engineer a satisfactory solution. Guy of Lusignan had lost his kingdom after the Battle of Hattin, but had demonstrated his loyalty to the Lionheart by sailing to Cyprus and offering the support of his small army during the Third Crusade. Acknowledging Guy's devotion, Richard temporarily took Cyprus back and sold it to Guy, who had the enthusiastic financial backing of Italian merchants who saw opportunities to gain trade concessions.

Although the Knights Templar had relinquished control of Cyprus, they did not receive a refund of the 40,000 gold coins they had tendered. Instead, they were allowed to retain their properties there, including castles, inland enclaves, and port installations at Nicosia, Limassol, Famagusta, Gastria, Khiokitia, and Yermsoyia. Technically, the House of Lusignan continued to rule Cyprus until the late 1400s.

A century after Guy of Lusignan had wrested Acre from Muslim control during the Third Crusade, the port city was again imperilled. This time, the powerful Mamluk Sultanate mounted a siege, which ended with the fall of Acre on 18 May 1291. The last vestige of Crusader military strength in the Holy Land was gone. Soon-to-be grand master Thibaud Gaudin and a handful of

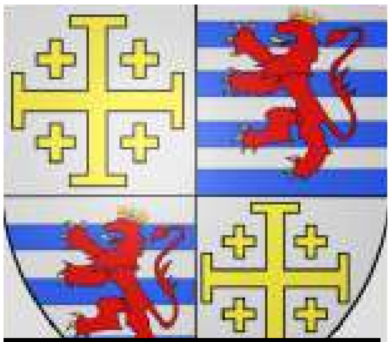


King Richard I of England, known as The Lionheart, and Crusader forces pray before going into battle

Once and future Cypriot king

Succession, exhile and reclamation

King Henry II of Cyprus was also the last crowned king of Jerusalem, having proclaimed himself as such on 15 August 1286. Henry was a member of the House of Lusignan, who succeeded his brother, John I, on the throne in the spring of 1285. Some historians believe Henry may have poisoned his sibling to hasten his own ascent to power. During Henry's 'reign' as king of Jerusalem, much of the Holy Land was coming under Mamluk control, and the fall of Acre in 1291 ejected the Crusaders from the mainland of the Middle East. Henry did attempt to exert control over the expansion of the Knights Templar in Cyprus but also worked with them to oppose the extension of Muslim conquest. He also allied with the Mongols, attempted to cut off trade between Genoese merchants and the Mamluks, and wrote twice to Pope Clement V in support of a renewed general crusade against the Muslims. By 1306, however, Henry was vulnerable. His brother, Amalric, in league with the Knights Templar, sought to take the throne. He had already condemned his brother, Guy, Constable of Cyprus, to death for a similar conspiracy. But this time, Henry was deposed and exiled to Armenia, where he was imprisoned by Amalric's brother-in-law, King Oshin. Amalric was murdered in 1310, and Henry returned to Cyprus, reclaiming the throne with the help of the Knights Hospitaller. Three years later, he presided over the transfer of Knights Templar assets to the Hospitallers. He reigned until his death in 1324.



The lion and the cross are prominent symbols on the coat of arms of the House of Lusignan of Cyprus and Jerusalem.

knights fled their seaside fortress at night, carrying the Templar treasury to safety at Sidon. Peter de Severy, leader of the remaining Knights Templar at Acre, negotiated a settlement with Sultan Khalil, the Mamluk commander, for safe passage to Cyprus. However, the agreement fell apart when Templars killed Mamluk warriors who tried to place women and children in chains as slaves. When Severy approached Khalil with the hope of brokering another deal, his delegation was put to death. On 28 May, the Templar fortress physically collapsed, killing all remaining Knights at Acre.

The surviving Templars and refugees had fled to Cyprus, which became the foundation of further Templar influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Little interest remained in mounting another crusade against the Muslims. However, the Knights Templar did exert control of sea routes in the region and accumulated wealth through their commerce and banking expertise. Grand master Thibaud Gaudin died in 1292, and his foremost lieutenant, Jacques de Molay, became the 23rd and last grand master of the Knights Templar.

Under de Molay's leadership, the Knights received some support from Europe to rebuild their forces and sustain defences on Cyprus. However, his efforts to muster enough enthusiasm for a renewed crusade failed. De Molay defended his position not only against the Mamluks, but also against rival Henry II of Cyprus, the last actual King of Jerusalem and a member of the House of Lusignan. Henry had allowed both the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller to take refuge in Cyprus, but placed restrictions on their ownership of additional lands. The Hospitallers eventually left Cyprus for this reason and established their own seat of power on the island of Rhodes.

De Molay, though, managed to unite the forces of Henry II with the Templars, other Christian military orders, and the Mongols of the Persian Ikhanate. From 1299 to 1303, he planned and executed a series of raids against the mainland of the Holy Land and other Muslim strongholds.

In the summer of 1300, de Molay and Henry II led a small force aboard 16 ships from Famagusta and conducted raids against settlements along the coasts of Syria and Egypt. The raiders struck Acre, Alexandria, Rosetta, Tortosa and Maraclea before retiring to Cyprus. That same year, preparations were made for a larger assault on Tortosa. Cypriot forces landed on the island of Ruad, where the Knights established a staging area to seize a lodgement at Tortosa and advance further with the help of the Mongols. On at least three occasions, the Mongols failed to appear, and finally Ruad was lost after a siege that concluded on 26 September 1302.

After the fall of Ruad, de Molay discontinued the tactic of small raids and began his unsuccessful quest for support of a renewed major crusade. While his effort continued, debate arose concerning the merger of the Knights Templar with other military orders, possibly to bring the forces together under one king who would rule as the sovereign of Jerusalem if and when the holy city and surrounding territory were reconquered.

By 1305, Pope Clement V had requested that de Molay and the leaders of the other military orders, including the Knights Hospitaller, provide their views on the merging of the orders and a renewed crusade. De Molay complied in the summer of 1306, and then travelled with other leaders of the Knights Templar to France to meet with Clement V and the Knights Hospitaller. Clement was under the influence of King Philip IV of France, who was deeply in debt to the Knights Templar and wanted to effect the merger to control the order directly and perhaps erase his debt.

Other headwinds were brewing against the Knights Templar, including accusations of heresy and despicable acts that were put forward by former Knights who had been thrown out of the order. De Molay's opposition to the merger and the charges against the Knights fuelled Philip IV's rage and provided an opportunity. On Friday 13 October 1307, de Molay and many Knights Templar were arrested.

Trial, torture and tribulation lay ahead.

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Betrayal of the Knights Templar

In seven years, the order was hunted, dismantled and executed. Was this justice for their sacrilegious practices, or were they the victims of a twisted plot?

Written by Frances White

Jacques de Molay was calm. Through seven long years of accusations, trials, torture, denials and confessions, he had been anything but calm, but as the frail, bearded man was led out onto the Île aux Juifs on the Seine, he did not weep or tremble. A crowd had gathered to watch the old man die, and a pyre had been erected on the small island, ready to be lit and claim his soul. De Molay was stripped of the rags that were once clothes, down to his threadbare shirt, then the guards strapped his thin, pale body to the stake. Finally, the silent man spoke. He asked to be turned to face the cathedral of Notre Dame, and that his hands be freed so he could die in prayer. These requests were granted, and De Molay bowed his head in silent prayer as the pyre was lit. The flames grew fast, and as the tongues of fire lashed up around his body, he spoke once more, his voice rising above the crackle of the flames.

"God knows who is in the wrong and has sinned!" he proclaimed. "Misfortune will soon befall those who have wrongly condemned us; god will avenge our deaths. Make no mistake, all who are against us will suffer because of us!" The flames rose higher, but the pain did not tell on his face. "Pope Clement, King Philip - hear me now!" His voice roared. "Within a year you will answer for your crimes before the presence of god!" After these final words, De Molay fell silent, and the flames claimed his soul.

Before the year was over, Pope Clement and Philip IV were dead. Clement finally succumbed to a long illness on 20 April 1314, and the French king died after a hunting accident on 29 November 1314, aged just 46. De Molay's order was all but extinct, but the curse of the last grand master of the Knights Templar would live on in infamy.

Jacques de Molay's famous last words may not have actually been spoken by the grand master himself. Like so many aspects of the Knights Templar, they have been distorted by myth and legend, and today we just don't know if he cursed his betrayers with his dying breath. Thanks to their sudden and dramatic fall, an array of rumours, myths and conspiracies have persisted about the mysterious order, obscuring their true humble beginnings and devastating end that rocked 14th-century Europe.

Key figures

The men who destroyed the Order, and those who fought to defend it

Jacques de Molay

1243 - 18 March 1314

The 23rd and last grand master of the Knights Templar. Little is known of De Molay's early life, but he subsequently became the most well known Templar. He aimed to reform the Order, a goal he was never able to fulfil.

Philip IV of France

1268 – 29 November 1314

Also known as the Iron King, Philip led France from a feudal country to a centralised state. He had great belief in an all-powerful monarchy, and it was his ambition to fill thrones worldwide with his relatives. As well as destroying the Knights Templar, he also expelled Jews from France.

Pope Clement V

1264-1314

Born Raymond Bertrand de Got, Clement was made pope on 5 June 1305. There is some dispute over his loyalty to Philip IV, with some painting him as nothing but a tool for the French king, while others believing he showed surprising resistance. Either way, he is now remembered as the pope who suppressed the Knights Templar.

Guillaume de Nogaret

1260-1313

Keeper of the seal to Philip IV of France, Guillaume had previously played a role in the dispute between Philip and Pope Boniface; apparently persuading the king to kidnap the pope. He also had a central part in the fall of the Knights Templar, forcing members to give testimony against the Order.

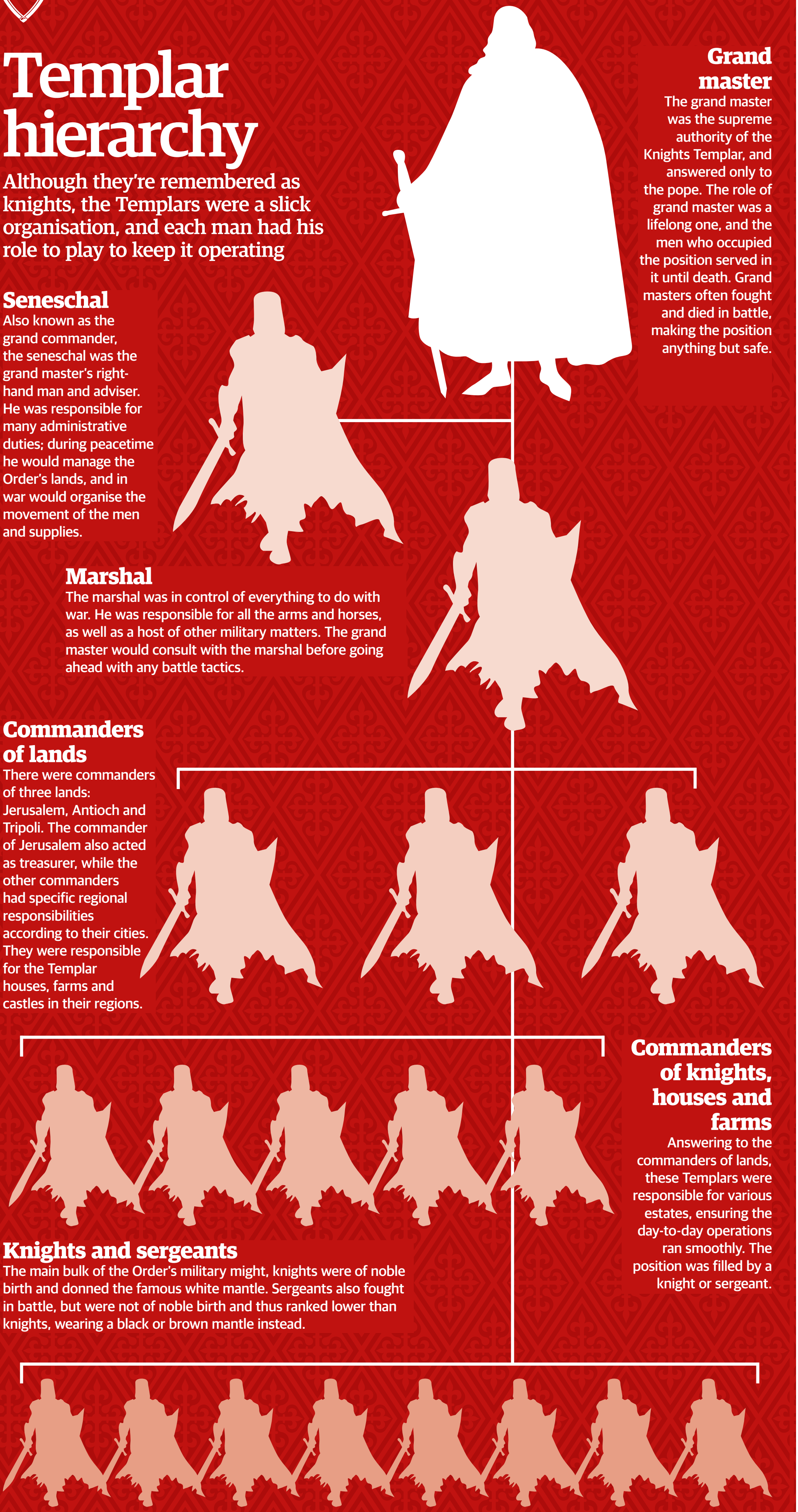
Geoffroi de Charney

Unknown - 1314

Serving as preceptor of Normandy, Charney was a member of the Knights Templar from a young age and rose through the ranks. Like much of his order, he was arrested, tortured and confessed, then later retracted his statement. Charney was the only one of the three senior leaders arrested to rally by his master's side and deny the charges.

Templar hierarchy

Although they're remembered as knights, the Templars were a slick organisation, and each man had his role to play to keep it operating



Grand master

The grand master was the supreme authority of the Knights Templar, and answered only to the pope. The role of grand master was a lifelong one, and the men who occupied the position served in it until death. Grand masters often fought and died in battle, making the position anything but safe.

Seneschal

Also known as the grand commander, the seneschal was the grand master's right-hand man and adviser. He was responsible for many administrative duties; during peacetime he would manage the Order's lands, and in war would organise the movement of the men and supplies.

Marshal

The marshal was in control of everything to do with war. He was responsible for all the arms and horses, as well as a host of other military matters. The grand master would consult with the marshal before going ahead with any battle tactics.

Commanders of lands

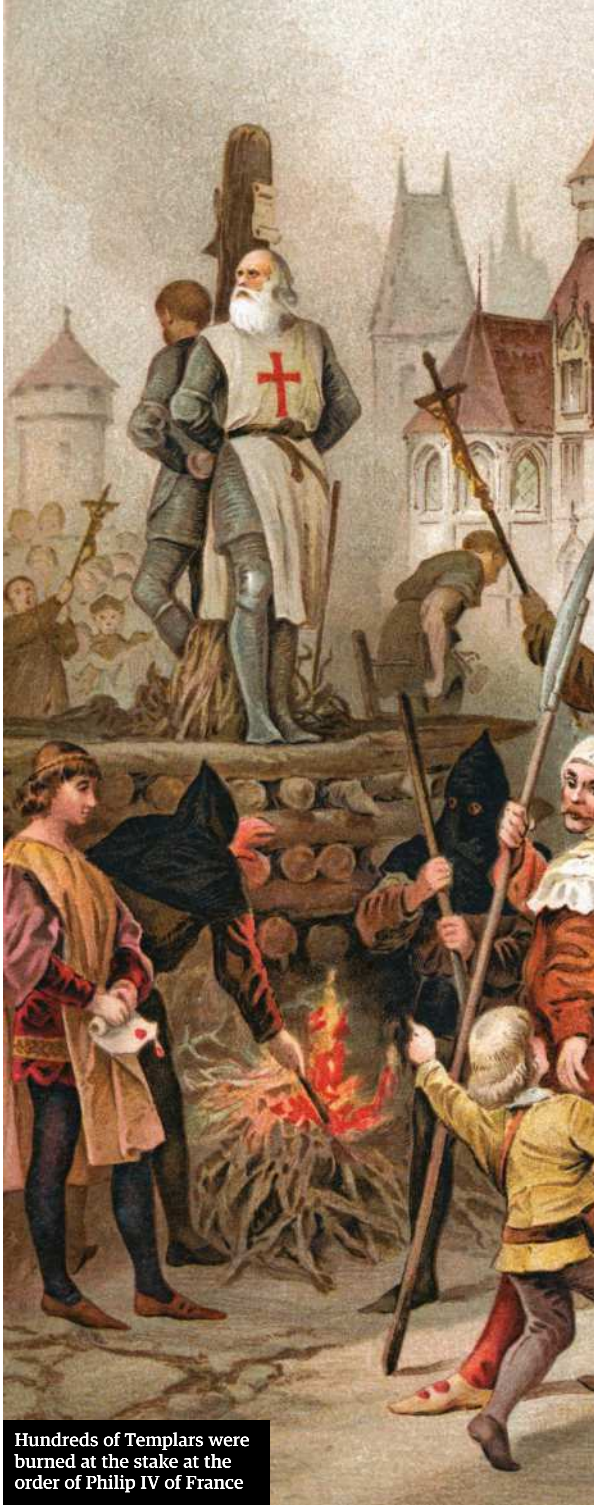
There were commanders of three lands: Jerusalem, Antioch and Tripoli. The commander of Jerusalem also acted as treasurer, while the other commanders had specific regional responsibilities according to their cities. They were responsible for the Templar houses, farms and castles in their regions.

Commanders of knights, houses and farms

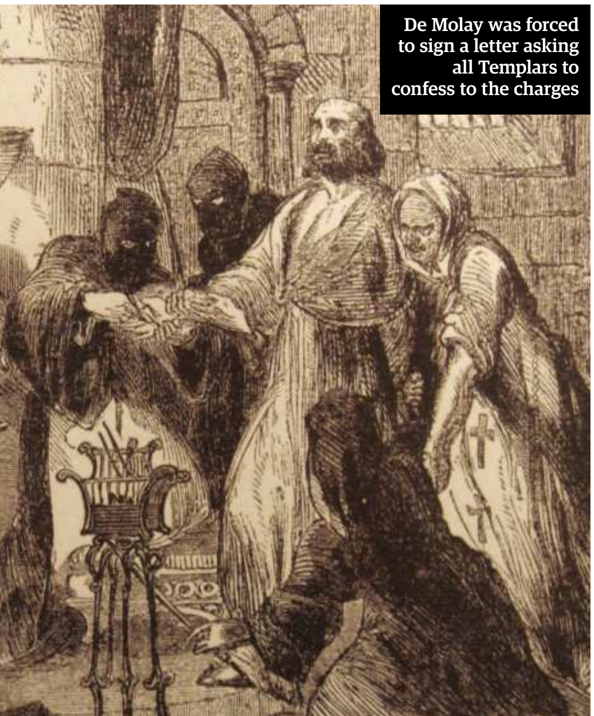
Answering to the commanders of lands, these Templars were responsible for various estates, ensuring the day-to-day operations ran smoothly. The position was filled by a knight or sergeant.

Knights and sergeants

The main bulk of the Order's military might, knights were of noble birth and donned the famous white mantle. Sergeants also fought in battle, but were not of noble birth and thus ranked lower than knights, wearing a black or brown mantle instead.



Hundreds of Templars were burned at the stake at the order of Philip IV of France



De Molay was forced to sign a letter asking all Templars to confess to the charges

After the city of Jerusalem was captured by Christian forces in the First Crusade, many European pilgrims chose to make the journey to the Holy Land. However, this route was not safe for the Christians to travel along, so several knights charged themselves with protecting the roads from robbers and brigands. This guild of knights was founded on Christmas Day 1119 on the spot that marks the place where Jesus was crucified. As their headquarters were located on the Temple Mount, they became known as 'Knights of the Temple', or Knights Templar.

Although the order began in virtual poverty, relying on donations to survive, they quickly became one of the most powerful monastic orders in the Medieval world. With papal approval, money, land and eager young noblemen poured into the Templars' resources. Serving as the West's first uniformed standing army in their white tunics emblazoned with a fiery red cross, the Templars achieved legendary status in battle.

This reputation as god's warriors was encouraged by their victory at the Battle of Montgisard, where 500 Templars helped an army numbering a few thousand defeat 26,000 of Saladin's soldiers. As well as being a mighty military force, they also controlled a vast financial network, which has been recognised as the world's first modern banking system. Many nobles who wished to join the crusades placed their wealth under the control of the Templars, who then issued them with letters of credit. This could be used at Templar houses around the world to 'withdraw' their funds. By the 13th century, the Templars were one of the most powerful and wealthy organisations in the world, entirely unaware that a dramatic and terrible fate awaited them. However, it would not be the Muslims in the East who would bring about their downfall, but their fellow Christians in the West.

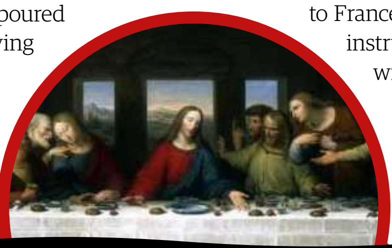
After the fall of Acre in 1291, the West lost its last Christian possessions in the Holy Land. The Templars were cast out from their origins and stripped of their raison d'être. When Jacques de Molay ascended as grand master in 1293, he had one goal in mind - to reclaim what the Templars had lost. De Molay travelled across the West to rustle up support; he received it from Pope Boniface and Edward I of England. But the crusade was a disaster, and De Molay lost 120 knights trying to land in Syria. In 1306, the Templars supported a coup in Cyprus that forced Henry II to abdicate in favour of his brother.

These actions did not go by unnoticed. Many monarchs in countries with powerful Templar presences began to feel uneasy - with their power, what was to stop the Templars supporting baron uprisings in their own countries? The Templars had also been very vocal in their desire to form their own state, similar to Prussia's Teutonic Knights and the Knights Hospitaller, another Catholic military order, in Rhodes.

In 1305, De Molay received a letter from Pope Clement V, then based in France, concerning the possibility of merging the Templars with the Hospitaller. De Molay was ardently against the idea, but in 1306 Clement invited both grand masters to France to discuss the issue further, instructing them to "come hither without delay, with as much secrecy as possible." De Molay arrived in 1307, but Foulques de Villaret, the leader of the Hospitaller, was either delayed or sensed something was amiss, as he did not arrive, and while the pope and De Molay waited, an entirely different subject of discussion was raised.

Two years before, an ousted Templar had accused the order of many criminal charges, and although they were generally believed to be false, King Philip IV of France had recently brought them back into discussion. De Molay, tiring of the ludicrous accusations, asked Clement to look into the matter to rid him of the whole messy situation. On 24 August, Clement wrote to Philip, saying that he did not believe the accusations but would start an inquiry "not without great sorrow, anxiety and upset of heart," and advised Philip to take no further action. Philip did not listen. At dawn on Friday 13 October, the king's forces arrested every Templar they could find in France.

Philip IV's harsh actions were not unprecedented; he had a reputation as a rash and violent king. Philip had previously clashed with Pope Boniface VIII, and launched an anti-papal campaign against him. Believing France should have centralised royal power, the feud escalated and ended with Philip attempting to kidnap the pope in 1303 to bring him to France to face charges of heresy. The shock ultimately killed Boniface, whose successor, Benedict XI, was then only in the position for nine months before his own death. This allowed the king to appoint his selection, Clement, to the papacy. Philip had also previously arrested wealthy



TEMPLAR MYSTERIES

Holy Grail

The Holy Grail is perhaps the item that the Templars are most closely associated with. From Wolfram von Eschenbach's Medieval romance *Parzival* to Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, throughout history the Templars have been linked to the mysterious relic. Often in fiction the Templars are portrayed as the guardian of the cup that Jesus used in the Last Supper, or even a deep and dramatic secret. Interestingly, the city in which the Templars were launched, Troyes, is also the place that the very first grail romance was written. Any actual link between the Templars and the grail likely emerged due to the fact that stories of the grail began to become popular in the 12th and 13th century, when the Templars were at the height of their power. Although they were part of society, the Templars were shrouded in secrecy even in their day, so it is no wonder such a mysterious vessel was linked to the Order.

In numbers

20,000
members at their peak

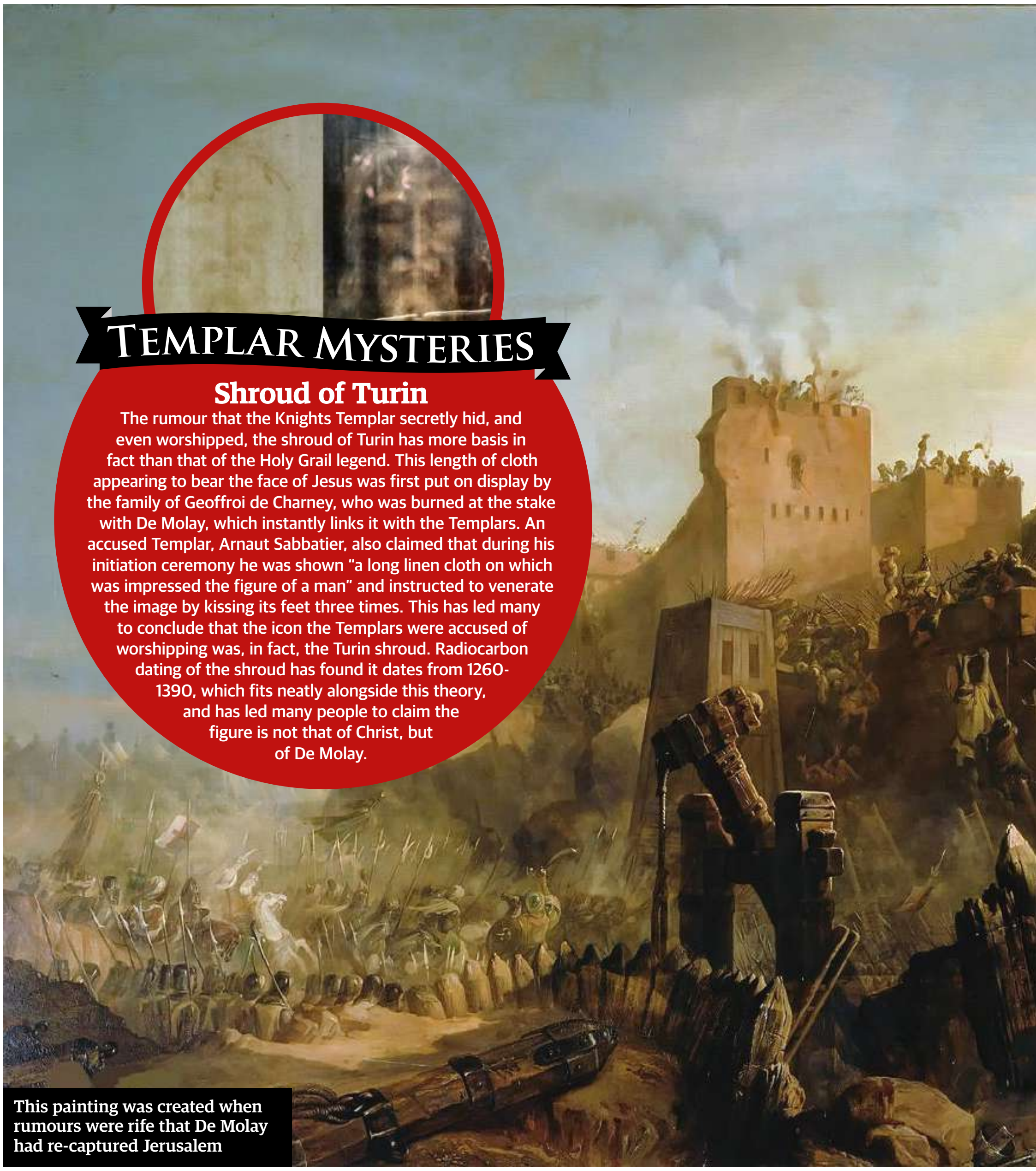
54+
Templars burned to death in May 1310

15
witnesses gave evidence against the order before 12 May 1310 – compared to 198 after

597
witnesses defended the order before 12 May 1310 – compared to 14 after

9 knights were originally gathered to protect pilgrims

200,000
livres paid by the Knights Hospitallers to the French king as 'compensation'



This painting was created when rumours were rife that De Molay had re-captured Jerusalem

TEMPLAR MYSTERIES

Shroud of Turin

The rumour that the Knights Templar secretly hid, and even worshipped, the shroud of Turin has more basis in fact than that of the Holy Grail legend. This length of cloth appearing to bear the face of Jesus was first put on display by the family of Geoffroi de Charney, who was burned at the stake with De Molay, which instantly links it with the Templars. An accused Templar, Arnaut Sabbatier, also claimed that during his initiation ceremony he was shown "a long linen cloth on which was impressed the figure of a man" and instructed to venerate the image by kissing its feet three times. This has led many to conclude that the icon the Templars were accused of worshipping was, in fact, the Turin shroud. Radiocarbon dating of the shroud has found it dates from 1260-1390, which fits neatly alongside this theory, and has led many people to claim the figure is not that of Christ, but of De Molay.

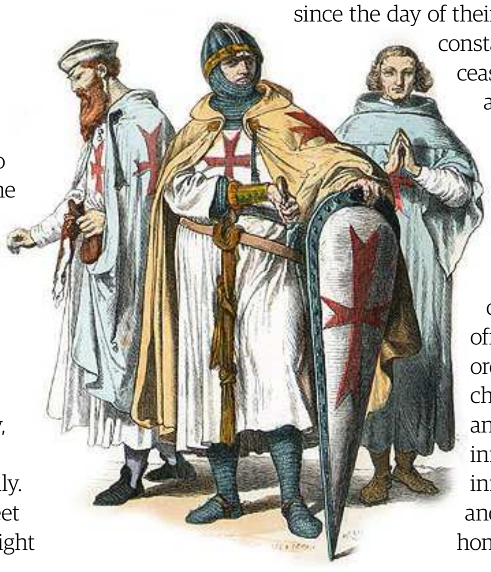
Italian bankers in the city, stripping them of their assets; then his target switched to the Jews, who were thrown out of the kingdom. These actions can be easily explained – Philip had inherited a kingdom on the brink of financial crisis, and he also believed that his authority was above that of the pope. Not only did he owe the Templars a great deal of money, but their link to the Church made them the perfect choice for establishing the power of the monarchy. With their plans to form their own state, the order had basically sealed their own fate. The Templars had to fall for Philip to rise.

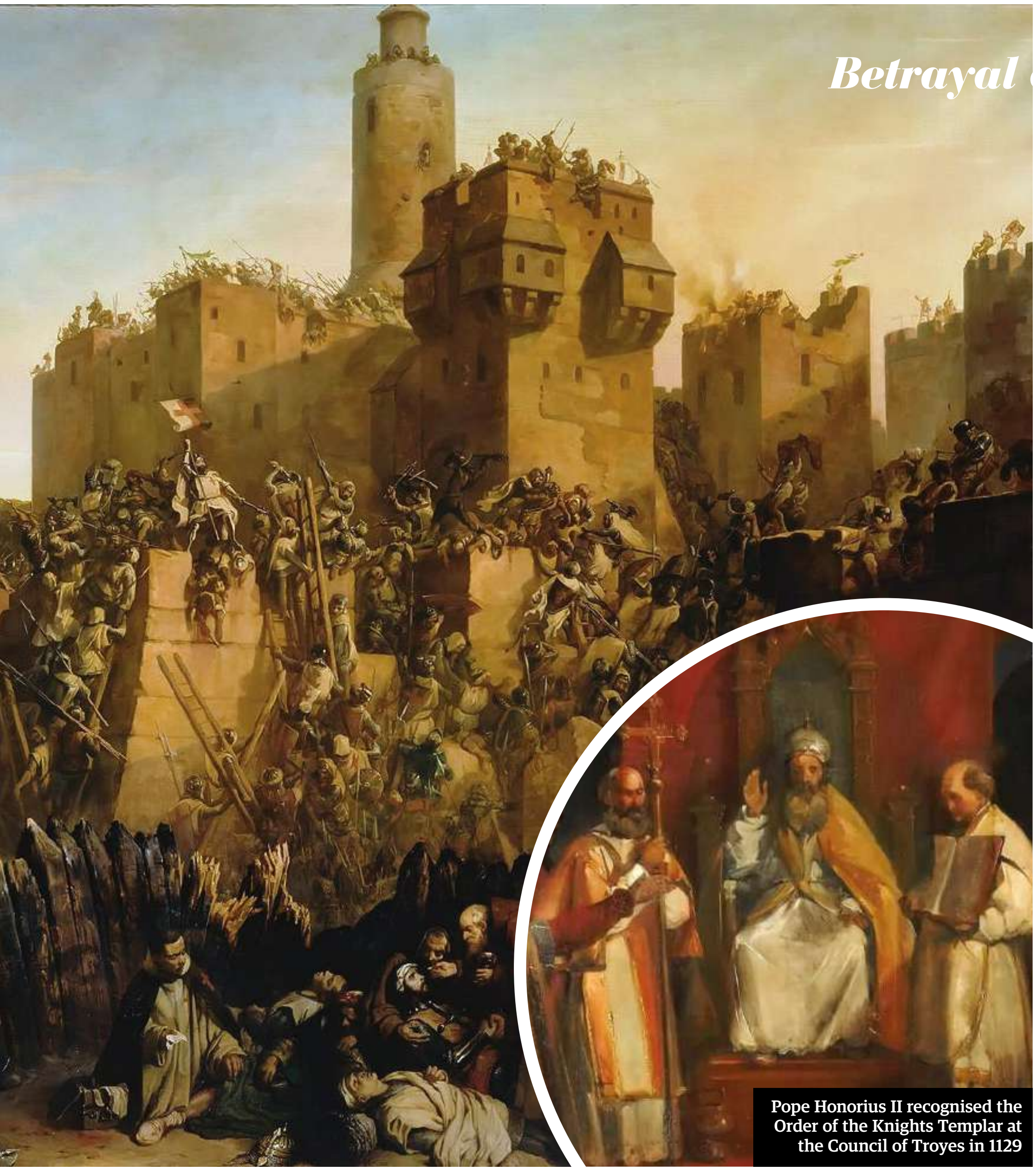
When the Templars in France were arrested, the charges put against them were heresy, sodomy, blasphemy and denying Christ. By charging them with heresy, Philip could paint himself as a soldier of Christ, similar to that of his sainted grandfather Louis IX. But his actions were a violation of the Church in Rome's orders, and Clement was furious. Philip had likely believed the pope to be a frail and infirm old man and certainly not a threat, but Clement wrote angrily to Philip, accusing him of violating every rule in this "act of contempt towards the Roman Church."

This did little to help the brothers of the temple. Some 15,000 Templars now resided in the prisons of France; many were not nobles nor knights, but mere farmers and shepherds. De Molay didn't escape capture either; just a day after acting as pallbearer at the funeral of the king's sister-in-law, the grand master was arrested along with the rest of his order. Philip seized their land and property, and set about ensuring he obtained the confessions he needed to smash the order to pieces.

There was one very simple way of acquiring confessions, and Philip employed it to great success: torture. Philip's inquisitors utilised a variety of horrific and demoralising methods to break the men's wills. The rack, which stretched a victim's body and dislocated his joints, was frequently used, as was strappado, which involved binding a victim's hands with rope that ran up a pulley, raising him in the air, then dropping him rapidly. The soles of prisoners' feet were greased then set alight with flame, teeth were pulled and limbs were flayed. The men were confined to cold, dark cells, and those who did not survive the torture were secretly buried. One anonymous writer in 1308 wrote of the conditions in the cells: "The human tongue cannot express the punishment, afflictions, miseries, taunts, and dire kinds of torture suffered by the said innocents in the space of three months, since the day of their arrest, since by day and night constant sobs and sighs have not ceased in their cells, nor have cries and gnashing of teeth ceased in their tortures… Truth kills them, and lies liberate them from death."

It is of no surprise that when the Templars were brought to trial, many confessed to the various offences put against them. The order was faced with five initial charges: the renouncement of and spitting on the cross during initiation; the kissing of the initiate on the navel, mouth and posteriors; the permitting of homosexual acts; that the cord





Pope Honorius II recognised the Order of the Knights Templar at the Council of Troyes in 1129

they wore had been wrapped around an idol they worshipped; and that they did not consecrate the host during mass. Over the trials, the charges against the Templars grew and grew in number, ranging from burning infants to abusing virgins and even forcing young brethren to eat the ashes of the dead. Although these charges seem outrageous and somewhat farfetched today, Philip was operating at a time when paranoia and suspicion surrounding god and the devil was so rife that it could be reasonably believed that such devilish practices had infiltrated the Church.

In hearings presided over by the inquisitors who had overseen the torture, 134 of 138 brothers confessed to one or more of the charges. De Molay himself signed a confession after undergoing the flaying of his limbs and testicles. This was quickly followed by matching confessions from all senior members of the Order. However, when Clement insisted the confessions be heard before a papal committee, De Molay and his men did an about turn. Safely away from Philip's control, De Molay retracted his confession, claiming he only gave it initially due to the torture he suffered. The other Templars followed suit and Philip's plans for a swift and brutal end to the order vanished.

In an attempt to convince Clement, Philip visited him at Poitiers and sent 72 Templars to confess before him. He had his forces dispense pamphlets and give speeches concerning the depravity of the Templars. Philip warned that if the pope didn't act, he would have to be removed in order to defend Catholicism. Harangued, bullied and now under virtual house arrest, Clement gave in and ordered an investigation into the Templars. De Molay and the other senior members retracted their retractions and Philip's grand plans were in motion once again.

The Templars had nothing in the form of legal council; De Molay expressed desires to defend his order but was unable to as a "poor, unlettered knight." In 1310, two Templars with legal training made an impressive defence against the charges – insisting that the Templars were not only innocent but also at the sharp end of a cruel plot. The tide was beginning to turn in the Templars' favour, so Philip made a swift and brutal decision. On 12 May 1310, 54 Templars who had previously withdrawn their confessions were burned at the stake as relapsed heretics and the two Templar defenders disappeared from prison.

With nobody to defend them, the Templar case crumbled. Under extreme pressure from Philip and likely wishing to rid himself of the whole matter

The Templars across Europe

When the pope ordered Christian monarchs across Europe to arrest Templars, not all were willing

British Isles

Edward II was initially sceptical about the Templars' guilt and had no reasons to view them as a threat. He wrote to the pope in defence of the Order, but was eventually forced to arrest and try many Templars. Initially, torture was not allowed and all the Templars pleaded innocent, but when the pope's inquisitors took over, confessions came fast. However, they were spared burning and simply forced to repent publicly. Those who refused were incarcerated until death.

Italy

The situation in Italy varied. The Papal States unsurprisingly acted at once, but in Lombardy there was widespread support for the Order. For the number of Templars confessing to the accusations, there were just as many claiming the others were lying. In Florence, despite using torture, only 6 of 13 Templars confessed.

Cyprus

King Amaury de Lusignan had earned his crown thanks to the Templars, so was understandably reluctant to arrest them. However, the leading Templars were eventually incarcerated after putting up a brave resistance. At trial, there were many witnesses who praised the Templars, but the king was brutally murdered during the trial and Henry II, enemy of the Templars, regained the throne. Torture began almost immediately, and many perished while protesting their innocence.

Portugal

The Templars in Portugal got off lightly compared to their counterparts elsewhere. King Denis I refused to persecute the Order, but could not overrule the papal bull to abolish the Templars. Instead, the Templars re-branded themselves as the 'Order of Christ' with the assured protection of Denis I, who also negotiated with Clement's successor for the order to inherit the Templars' assets.

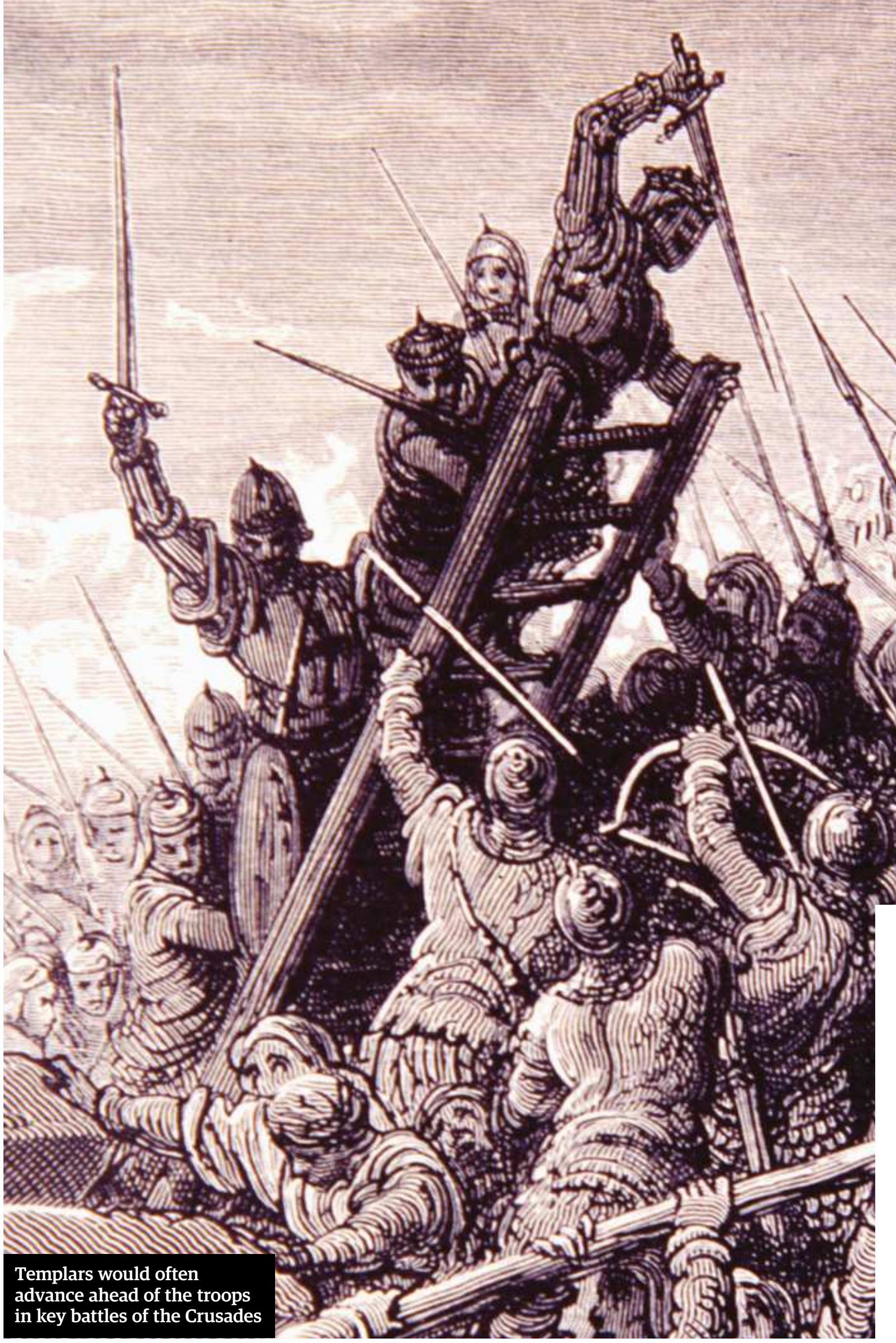
Iberian Peninsula

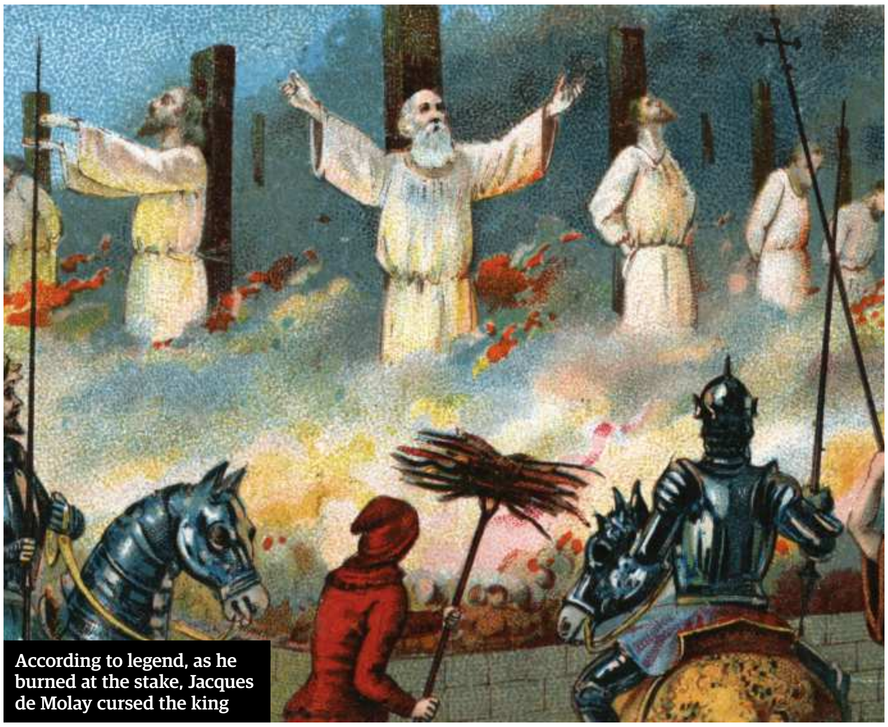
Despite initial doubts, James II of Aragon ordered the arrest of most of the Templars on 6 January 1308, before the pope ordered him to do so. However, many of the Templars set up defences in their castles and appealed for help, which unfortunately did not come. All of the Templars pleaded their innocence. With torture prohibited, no confessions were secured, and no Templar was condemned to death for heresy.

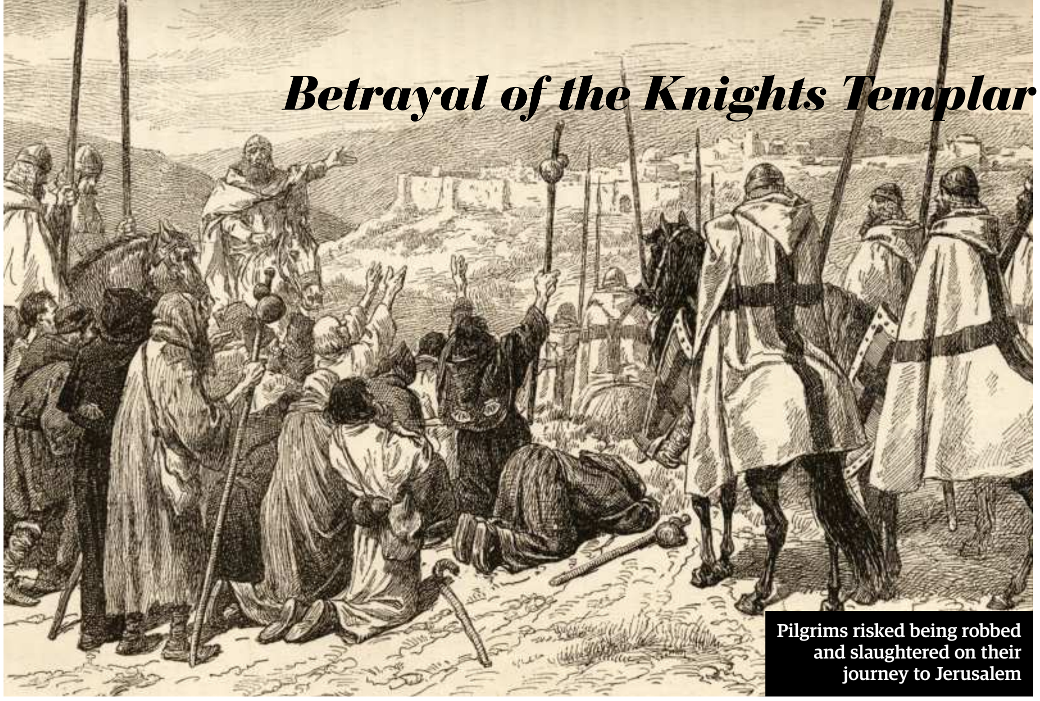
Guilty or innocent?

Was there any truth to the crimes the Templars burned for?

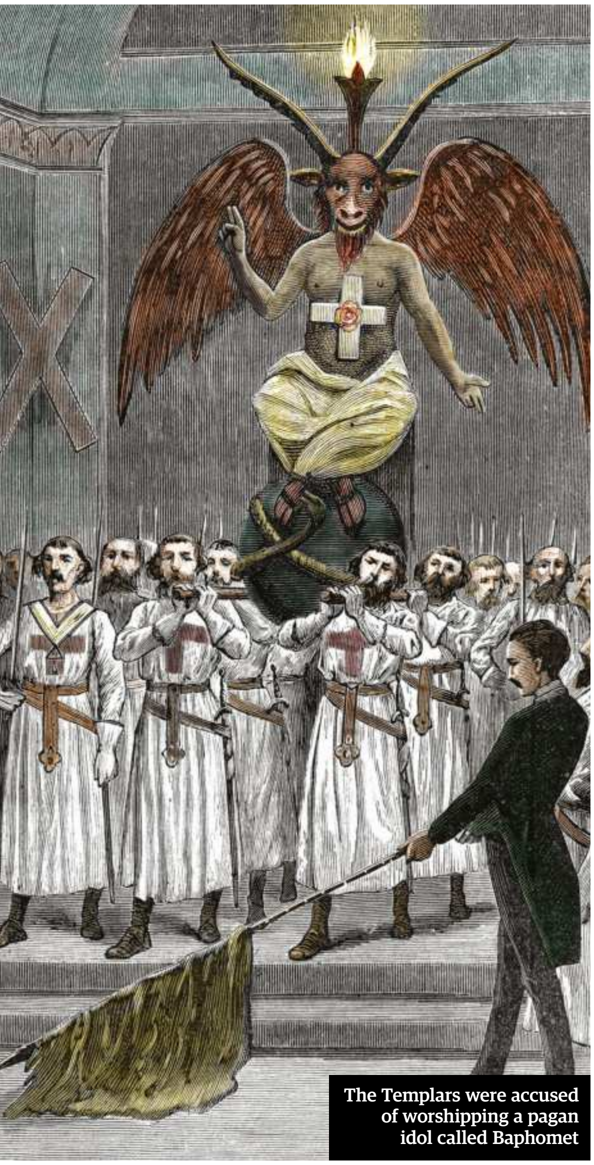
	FOR	AGAINST
SPITTING ON THE CROSS	Although often written as one of Philip's many trumped-up charges, there is evidence that this accusation had basis in fact. Not only did a number of Templars confess to it, but Philip's spies, who secretly joined the Order, confirmed it. A recent discovery of the 'Chinon Parchment' in the Vatican library further confirms the charges. Under questioning in 1308, Jacques de Molay admitted to such practices.	Although De Molay confirmed that spitting on the cross took place, chalking this up to heresy shows a lack of understanding. De Molay said these practices were designed to harden a Templar to the torture he would be subjected to by Saracens, training them to deny their faith "with the mind and not with the heart." Philip's spies may very well have witnessed such acts, but they likely misunderstood their purpose.
WORSHIP OF AN IDOL CALLED BAPHOMET	The charge put against the Templars read "they surrounded or touched each head of the idols with small cords, which they wore around themselves next to the shirt or the flesh." Unlike Philip's other charges, this accusation was so specific to the Templars that it's difficult to believe he didn't have some inside information. Many knights did admit to worshipping this idol, which usually took the form of a life-sized head. We know for a fact that the Knights Templar possessed heads, such as the head of St Euphemia of Chalcedon. The fact that the order kept these heads means that they certainly could have worshipped them in some way.	Only nine Templars in the Paris trials admitted to head worship, and descriptions of this 'idol' differed across Europe. In one version it was "covered in old skin, with two carbunkles for eyes," in another it was made of gold and silver; one had three or four legs, while in another account the head had horns. These conflicting accounts heavily indicate that these confessions were the result of torture. This idol was allegedly named 'Baphomet', but it may be the case that this was a mistranslation of 'Mahomet', ie Muhammad. Either way, if the Templars did indeed worship such an idol, it seems unusual that their temples were not filled with clear symbols of this figure.
HOMOSEXUALITY	The charges the Templars faced were that "they told the brothers whom they received they could have carnal relations together… that they ought to do and submit to this mutually." As the Templars took vows of celibacy and were not permitted to wed, it was believed that they engaged in homosexual activity to satisfy their desires. Although few confessed, many testified that sexual activity was not prohibited. The fact that so many denied it under torture is an indication of just how shamefully sodomy was viewed, giving the Templars all the more reason to hide the truth.	This was the most common accusation used during this era to discredit or ruin anyone. Philip had already charged Pope Boniface VIII with very similar accusations, and it seemed to be his favourite tool to use against his enemies as it was difficult to disprove. However, despite the torture, only three Templars confessed to sodomy in the Paris trials. Although De Molay was quick to confess to denying Christ, he vehemently opposed this accusation, stating that the Templar rules clearly prohibit any such behaviour with harsh punishment, such as expulsion from the Order.


Templars would often advance ahead of the troops in key battles of the Crusades


According to legend, as he burned at the stake, Jacques de Molay cursed the king



Pilgrims risked being robbed and slaughtered on their journey to Jerusalem



The Templars were accused of worshipping a pagan idol called Baphomet

once and for all, Clement issued an edict that officially dissolved the Order. This didn't mean the brothers were guilty, but it was the end of the Knights Templar for good. Much to Philip's annoyance, a second papal bull was issued that transferred the Templars' wealth to the Hospitaller. Finally, the bull 'Considerantes Dudum' allowed each province to deal with the Templars residing there as they saw fit. The fate of the leaders, however, was in the hands of the Church.

De Molay and three of his senior members languished in prison, awaiting news of their fates. Finally, on 18 March 1314, the leaders were led out to a platform in front of Notre Dame to hear their sentences. All four were old men; De Molay was, by now, at least 70, while the others ranged from 50-60. Due to their earlier confessions, they were found guilty of heresy and condemned to life imprisonment. Two of the men silently accepted their fate, but faced with living out the rest of his life starving in a dank, dark cell as the last leader of a humiliated and disgraced order, De Molay finally found his voice. To the shock of the crowd, and the horror of the cardinals, the grand master and his loyal master of Normandy, Geoffroi de Charney, loudly protested their innocence. They denied their confessions, insisting their order was nothing but holy and pure. For seven years of imprisonment, De Molay had failed to defend his order, but now he was doing it – with his life.

This was completely unexpected, and left the cardinals confused about what to do. When the news reached Philip, he was furious. He ruled that as the Templars were now professing their innocence, they were guilty of being relapsed heretics, the punishment for which was death by fire. Before the end of the day, De Molay and De Charney were dead. Instead of living out his final days disgraced in a cell, De Molay's final moments of bravery led many to hail him as a martyr.

The remaining Templars were not released from their monastic vows and many were subjected to penances such as lengthy prison sentences. A large number of Templars joined the Knights Hospitallers as the Pope originally intended but some were sent to live out their remaining days in isolated monasteries. Some remaining members were able to live on their pension as ordinary members of society, retiring from the life of a 'knight' for good. Even with these numbers accounted for, there are still question marks over what happened to the tens of thousands of brothers across Europe. The Order's archive was never found along with the majority of their treasures, leading many to believe that the Templars received some sort of warning, allowing many to escape prior to the initial arrests.

We do have more concrete information regarding what happened to the Templar property, especially regarding the holdings in England. Many place names in England today that include the word Temple do so because of historic links with the Templars. Similarly, many buildings across the country bear the Templar cross. Although this is obviously a sign that the Templars once owned the building, it was also common for landowners to mount the sign themselves to dodge tax. Another key architectural feature of the Templars was the image of two knights on a horse, and round buildings, reminiscent of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

TEMPLAR MYSTERIES

French Revolution

When Louis XVI was executed by guillotine at the height of the French Revolution, according to some sources a man jumped up onto the platform and dipped his fingers in the blood. He cried out "Jacques de Molay, thus you are avenged!" Then the crowd cheered. The legend that the Templars would enact revenge upon the French monarchy who had damned them was a popular rumour at the time, so speculation that they played a key part in starting the revolution was rife. This legend works alongside the idea that the remaining Templars went underground to continue their work, so relies on quite a leap of faith. But nevertheless, Jacques de Molay did indeed have his revenge.

© Alamy, Corbis, Getty Images, Joe Cummings

When the Templars were rapidly dismantled, although some members were free to find a new place in society, many of their buildings across the country were left to ruin.

Though not all – Temple Church, at the site of the old Preceptory in London still bears effigies of Crusading Templars. Some of the Templars' lands in London were later rented to lawyers, which led to the creation of many names we recognise today, such as the Temple Underground station, Temple Bar gateway and, of course, the entire region of Temple, London.

The Templar lands and assets were officially given over to the Knights Hospitaller, however the English crown did maintain hold on some of these assets until 1338. Most of the central Templar estates were eventually handed over to the Hospitallers, with the exception of Faxfleet, Temple Hirst and Temple Newsam (one of the wealthiest in the country). Not all countries were so willing to hand over their assets to the Hospitallers, and in the Iberian Peninsula, the king of Aragorn instead chose to hand over assets to the Order of Montesa.

In reality, the idea of transferring all lands and assets to the rival faction was not so easy to enforce. Lots of land and money previously belonging to the Templars did not quite make it to the Hospitalliers, and instead ended up in the pockets of nobles, most notably in Castille. In England it was not necessarily the land and property that proved to be most valuable, but instead the goods stored there.

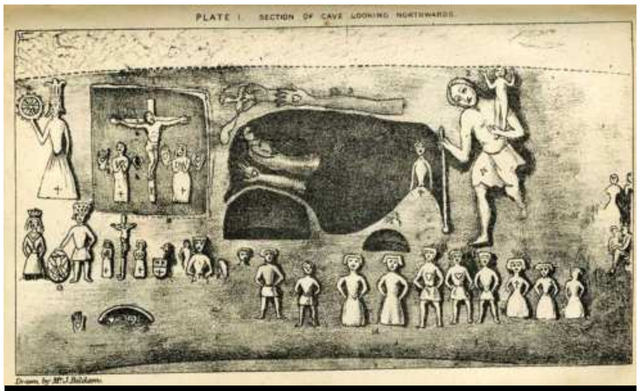


PLATE I. SECTION OF CAVE LOOKING NORTHWARDS
Drawn by Mr J. Beldam

It is rumoured that Templars used Royston Cave in Royston to meet in secret after their disbandment

ILBERT MARSHAL
rth Earl of Pembroke
EFFIGY OF A KNIG

The Temple Church still bears these marble effigies of medieval knights

The English Templars were shrewd businessmen; some properties boasted hordes of goods, such as 16 stone, or 38 sacks, of wool. The royal treasury had a very real need to replenish, and it is highly likely this is what motivated the Crown's seizure of Templar assets in England. The king quickly ordered all wool discovered to be delivered to merchants in Lucca, who the crowned were in debt to. The grain from Temple estates was also put to good use: filling the stomachs of his soldiers in Scotland.

The meat and fish from Templar estates were even used for the king's own coronation feast in Westminster, and the timber was cut and sold to further fill the coffers. Not entirely selfishly motivated, he also paid his clerk's salary, gave donations to religious houses, and put some to the aid of Scottish refugees. When Edward II finally ceded to give the property over to the Hospitallers, he had plucked most of the value he could from them. Horses, stock, even kitchen utensils and tools were stripped and sold before the knights could seize them. Even when Edward II finally gave up the property, it was not so easy for the Hospitallers to claim them.

With the Hospitallers possessing no deeds, charters or rolls, most were claimed, instead, by neighbouring lords. This wasn't unique to England, and it wasn't until 1324 that royal keepers in various countries were ordered to deliver the Templar lands to Hospitallers. This,

> "Templar lands and assets were officially given over to the Knights Hospitaller, however the English crown did maintain hold on some of these assets until 1338"

as expected, didn't go smoothly, and disputes continued. Throughout Europe, any person in a position of power jostled to secure and gain as much as they could from Templar lands before surrendering them, and some disputes dragged on for years and years. In France, Germany and Italy also, the Hospitallers only received part of their promised lands, and that was after long delays.

These properties and land remained with the Hospitallers for some time, but their power in England was suppressed, along with the monasteries, by Henry VIII who confiscated their property in 1540. Similarly, across Europe the Reformation saw support for the order decline rapidly in the short space of time and property was reclaimed. Because of this delayed and confused transfer of property, combined with the large numbers of Templars who seemed to have disappeared into oblivion, various conspiracy theories regarding the fate of the remaining Templars have been concocted. These include the proposition that they escaped on a fleet of ships to western Scotland, and them becoming Swiss freedom fighters.

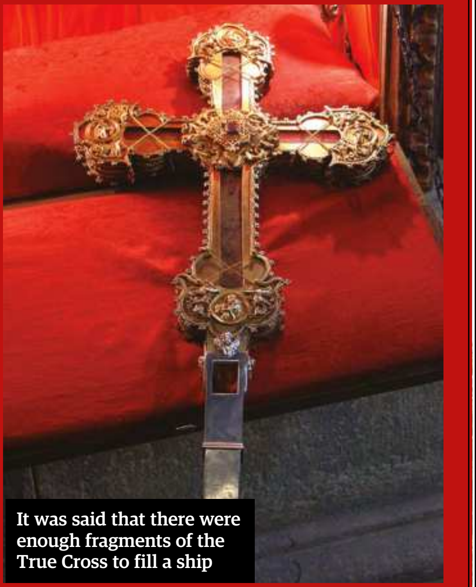
Although we do know the sad tale that ended the Order, the mystery of what became of the remaining Templars is likely to stay unsolved.

Originally a Templar stronghold, the Convent of Christ Castle in Portugal became the headquarters of the Order of Christ

The lost cross

Seized at Battle of Hattin

The True Cross was believed to be the physical cross on which Jesus was crucified. This cross possesses perhaps the bloodiest past of any relic in history. The legend goes that the cross was discovered by Empress Helena during a 4th-century journey into the Holy Land. The cross was then broken into fragments and dispersed. Part of this cross was supposedly discovered during the First Crusade, and became a relic of Jerusalem, being taken into battle no less than 31 times. However, the relic was seized by the Muslims during the Battle of Hattin in 1187. Despite crusader kings like Richard the Lionheart attempting to reclaim it, the fragment was never returned, and disappeared entirely from historical records.


It was said that there were enough fragments of the True Cross to fill a ship

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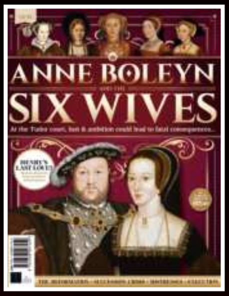
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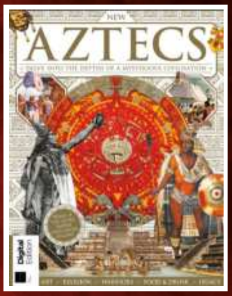

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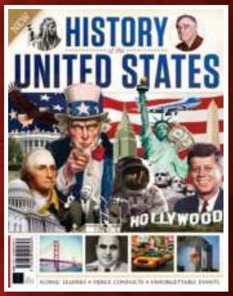
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